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**The changing role of evaluation in urban regeneration: a review of the extent to which learning takes places between successive regeneration initiatives in England.**

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The changing role of Evaluation in urban regeneration: A review of the extent to which learning takes place between successive regeneration initiatives in England.

Ian Sesnan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Westminster for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

July 2006

## **Abstract.**

The transfer, or exchange, of knowledge about “what works” in urban regeneration is of increasing importance because of the rise in complexity of the landscape of regeneration; the competition for resources; the New Labour government’s drive to focus on evidence- based practice; the increasing emphasis on community-led decision making and the perception that many previous initiatives have not worked as well as they could have.

Over the 30 year period researched for this thesis, evaluations and the reports arising from evaluation efforts have been the prime documented sources of learning and potential learning transfer. This thesis reports and analyses a sample of evaluation reports over that period and shows how evaluation has changed in its nature and approach. This documentary analysis also shows how little evidence there is of actual transfer of learning. However, a changing picture is shown with more evidence of conscious transfer of learning being associated with more recent evaluations. A wide ranging study of evaluation theory has also shown that there is a general recognition that evaluation efforts have not succeeded in transferring learning to the extent that they could have done. Many reasons have been found and documented for this, including the timing of evaluations; the lack of base-line data; the use of inappropriate indicators; the reliance on the evaluands for data; the commissioning of evaluation by those who also run the programmes and the failure of evaluations to address the core questions that might assist with learning.

This study breaks new ground by taking the documentary evidence and the evidence from theory and triangulating it with stakeholder interviews from four of the key programmes spanning much of that era. The interviewees are all key players, not just from the programme for which they were selected, but also involved in subsequent or previous regeneration programmes or similar public programmes. They are from central and local government, the private and community sectors, and programme management.

Their evidence, collected by interviews and subject to content analysis, enables a new insight to be gained into how effective transfer of learning really has been. This thesis demonstrates that evaluation has moved with the times and with the changes in governments and governance. In the early years of the study period evaluation was “top-down” and lessons tended to be written for and absorbed by the commissioners of programmes (usually central government) with little evidence of other forms of learning taking place. By the end of this study period, for programmes such as New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, evaluation was much more pluralistic, commissioned at many levels, and reported much more widely. However learning is still not focussed around these evaluation efforts and much more learning is taking place in informal ways. The study concludes that learning transfer has grown and developed over the years but in numerous, often informal ways and that this, in itself, may raise the question of not ‘is learning taking place?’ But ‘what is being learnt?’ The thesis concludes by suggesting a national evaluation framework to promote knowledge exchange supported by academic and other institutions. The thesis reports that at the time of writing some of these structures are now in place such as the Academy for Sustainable Communities.



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## **Chapter One - Selection of the research topic.**

The entire urban policy framework in England and Wales needs an urgent and comprehensive rethink and revamp. It is astonishing that throughout the last twelve years there has been no official evaluation of urban policy and who has benefited (CLES 1992: 60-61).

### **1.1 Introduction.**

This Chapter introduces the reasoning behind the choice of research topic and details the process of selection of a research topic. My original research proposal was to determine if it was possible, by examining published evaluation work, to arrive at a set of criteria for success or failure of urban regeneration programmes. I changed my view on this potential question as I entered into an assessment of the research methodology that would be required, the numerous conceptual difficulties, and the paucity of materials available.

As explained below, I then examined a range of questions and settled upon the topic of transfer of learning between urban regeneration programmes. Having chosen a topic the possible research questions had to be explored and this chapter sets out the logic for the choice of research question and the hypothesis which this thesis is testing.

### **1.2 Personal reasons for choosing this research topic.**

As a senior manager with 16 years experience of working in one of the local authorities (London Borough of Lambeth) that benefited from most of the main urban regeneration programmes I observed how there was a succession of urban regeneration programmes applied to parts of the Borough over that period.

My last few years at Lambeth were spent as a regeneration practitioner with projects running in the prestigious Central London area of the Cross River Partnership as well as in parts of Brixton, Clapham, and some peripheral housing estates.

I became concerned to observe how the processes of urban policy were applied. It was with some alarm that I observed that the response to the many social, economic, and physical problems in these areas was a succession of seemingly disjointed and always hastily rushed through initiatives. Whether it was City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget, Capital Challenge or any of the other numerous initiatives that local authorities were involved in, there was a desperate rush to justify how their areas were so deficient that they needed these extra injections of funds (more than all the other areas in the region that were deficient too). I used to refer to this as the “misery parade” and it seemed to lead to a focus on measures of under-performance rather than success.

This was a concern to me partly because of the effect that this constant “churn” of programmes was having on the community, and the officers and councillors involved, but also because many of these projects were “flagship” projects that would be seen by people across the country because they were at the heart of the capital city.

There also seemed to me to be two other reasons why the regeneration of these areas was so important. First; because there is so much potential for the growth of cities if these places and communities can be made to work well and second; because these are areas where huge public investment has already been made (sometimes quite recently), particularly in housing, and this investment is at risk along with the prospects of those who live there.

It therefore seemed to me to be of great strategic importance that some sort of rational, learning, regime should be established for the sustainable regeneration of these areas. Instead of which local authorities had to indulge in high profile “misery parades” to show that they should win each latest

challenge and receive funding from the latest tightly defined fund that would be controlled from the centre.

There seemed to be perverse incentives working, as it was those authorities that could show that they had most neglected their properties and most badly failed in education and other public services that could win these challenges. In my own experience local authorities would sometimes neglect their assets in potential regeneration areas so that the next big challenge funding round could then be used to make up the backlog. This was a practice that I called “regeneration blight”.

It is possible that this would have been a clever way of running local government if officers could be certain that when the next initiative came along it was going to solve the problems, be good value for money, and make things better and not worse. However, few practitioners, that I was aware of, across the various local authorities, central government, and other agencies, could say whether what was being proposed would actually work with any level of certainty. The main player who did have certainty was the local Development Trust (Coin Street Community Builders) who believed that they had a model which was proven to work and, in their own terms, they did succeed.

This is not to say that there was a reckless approach, in fact most of those involved were professionals with many years of experience and they were determined to do their best. However each programme was characterised by the hurried assembly of teams of officers from inside and outside of the local authority and the assembly of Boards from people who could be co-opted and often had never worked on integrated approaches to urban solutions before (and usually not at that level either).

There was one key thing missing from all the debates that I observed, that was a collective understanding of which interventions were likely to work in achieving the programme’s objectives. There were some projects that produced evidence as to how their own project was based on research or



successful experience, but not as to how the whole programme might work (for example; the inter-relationships with other projects and the holistic effect of all the interventions in an area).

### **1.3 Selection of the research question.**

When I first considered undertaking this study my original hypothesis was that it was possible to construct a matrix to predict the success or failure of a regeneration project. This would have been based on criteria of “success” and “failure”. The thinking behind this was to ask whether evaluation was capable of successfully identifying or even predicting success in urban regeneration programmes. However I rejected this approach as I realised that, even though it was a question that was fundamental to the fitness of evaluation for purpose, it only addressed part of the concern that I have. It did not get close enough to the question of whether in fact learning is transferred from the evaluation of one programme to the next. I also rejected it because it would have required a first stage of defining success and failure with all the attendant problems of: Who defines success?; How is it measured?; and how the multiple valid viewpoints that exist within regeneration can be reconciled?

In selecting a new research question I considered the features of regeneration programmes that may be more effectively researched. A key feature of regeneration policy in the United Kingdom is that it has led to a series of time-limited, usually area-based, initiatives. Programmes have tended to run in an overlapping sequence with each programme being wound down and replaced by the next before it has reached its end.

Each initiative ranging from the Community Development Programmes in the late 1960s and early 1970s through to the current New Deal for Communities has in turn been criticised for various aspects. There has been the hope, or expectation, among commentators that successive programmes



improve, based on the experience gained. In each case an evaluation has been conducted that could, potentially, discover and pass on learning.

To ascertain if learning had been transferred a research question then had to be chosen that either related to the effectiveness or appropriateness of evaluations that were carried out or considered if the mechanisms were in place (and were used) to carry forward learning from one programme to the next.

Possible questions on the former would be:

- 1) To what extent were the evaluations of the chosen regeneration programmes effective and therefore produced learning for future programmes?
- 2) In examining evaluations of chosen programmes is it possible to identify the extent to which they met basic tests of quality standards of evaluation, for example, the guidelines of the UK Evaluation Society (UKES 2003).

Possible questions arising from the latter would be:

- 3) To what extent were explicit or implicit mechanisms in place, and used, to ensure that learning was transferred from one programme to the next?
- 4) To what extent were successive regeneration programmes informed by the evaluations of previous programmes?

To assist with a rational assessment and choice around these questions I developed three basic “deliverability” criteria. These relate to the core purpose of the exercise; research that would be capable of being undertaken and submitted within the timescales and requirements of reading for a PhD.

Therefore these deliverability criteria were that:

- There was a clear original research task with the likelihood of some valuable results achievable within the scope of a PhD.
- There was official documentary evidence in the form of published evaluations.
- There were likely to be sufficient participants from the programmes in question available for interview.

It was also necessary to arrive at a territorial limitation on the research as different jurisdictions even within the United Kingdom have arrived at different approaches and terminologies with parallel sets of guidance and forms of practice. As an example, in Scotland the Scottish Executive is responsible for Central Government urban regeneration programmes. Whilst comparative studies can be a very effective way of understanding public policy there was evidence that the regeneration landscape in England was already so complex as to make understanding it a major task. Indeed it had been referred to as a “dizzying cocktail of funding and accountability procedures” by the Audit Commission (1989: 76).

To attempt to study other United Kingdom jurisdictions and foreign territories would have created a research task that was not achievable within the rules and timescales of a PhD. It may also have obscured the answer to the research question, as the extent to which the transfer of learning took place may be different in different territories. The research parameters were therefore set to include only England in the primary research but not to exclude other United Kingdom and international experience if appropriate to the question located in the English context.

## **1.4 Discussion on the potential research questions.**

The first of the above questions is important as the effectiveness of evaluation must be central to learning. Poor learning will surely result from an inadequately conducted evaluation. Indeed unhelpful or misleading lessons may be carried forward justifying partial projects or inadequately thought through interventions. A thoroughly executed evaluation could equally be inadequate if it is based on poor information, unbalanced perspectives, or lack of understanding of the political ecology. However, important though this is, this question could only be answered fully by conducting an “evaluation of evaluations”. To undertake this properly would require a massive exercise well beyond the scope of PhD research and requiring a multi-disciplinary team.

The second question homes in on one particularly important area of concern. What must an evaluation contain in order to qualify as being a valid evaluation? It would be possible to apply the standards espoused in guidance for example, the UK Evaluation Society (2003) but the standards are high and post-date many of the programme evaluations. They seem to be ideal standards that researchers would aspire to in planning new work but historic evaluations might fall significantly short of meeting these guidelines. Just one test; stakeholder involvement, may be sufficient to fail many of the older evaluations.

It has been proposed that effective evaluation has to include the views of all the stakeholders (Guba and Lincoln 1989: 124). Indeed involvement of all stakeholders is also stated policy in current government thinking:

When residents are drawn into the regeneration process, provision becomes more relevant, the service becomes more responsive (Social Exclusion Unit 1999: 14).



Therefore it would be possible to use the stakeholder test to examine the extent to which evaluations met or failed to meet this particular criterion. This would appear to be a very valuable approach but it contains at least two principal flaws:

- 1) It is already known, from an initial review of documentation, that full stakeholder evaluations have not been conducted in at least some of the programmes (see Chapter Six). Therefore the question has already been partially answered in the negative.
- 2) It is possible that adequate evaluations could have been conducted without explicitly meeting the stakeholder test. This could have been because of the nature of the activity for example, a physical intervention about which there seems to have been no controversy or where there is no affected population.

There was a danger, therefore, that the research would be weakened by being involved in a search for something that it is known is not there and discounting evaluation work undertaken in the early days by introducing retrospective criteria. Therefore I concluded that Questions One and Two relating to the quality or effectiveness of evaluations that have been undertaken have major limitations and could not form the basis of successful research.

The questions that relate to mechanisms and learning (Questions Three and Four on Page Ten) both would not be nullified by the quality of the evaluations and could simply look at whether learning was possible and/or did take place.

The third question (See Page Ten) relates to an area that has not, to the author's knowledge, been comprehensively researched – were the mechanisms in place to ensure that learning both could and did happen? Learning mechanisms could include policy, bureaucratic, staffing, dissemination, training, and other ways in which people pass on learning.



This appeared to be an area well worth further research as it deals with manageable, and usually documented, processes and is recent enough for the key actors to be still in posts in the profession. The area of potential original research is the interface between the process actions (conducting, publishing and disseminating evaluations) and the learning outcomes.

The fourth question, would have led to a study of effects rather than mechanisms. This question would have examined what lessons were learnt and applied across successive programmes. This would be an examination of effects or outcomes rather than processes. The answer to this question would involve assessing end-results rather than inputs or mechanisms. Much of the data would have to be gathered by interview as well as desk research because of all the “soft” factors mentioned above.

The difficulties of addressing this fourth question have also been highlighted in considering the previous questions, including the quality of the lessons learnt. However there is a further difficulty – defining who has learnt the lessons and how have they applied that learning. Is it the funder, the programme designer, the officers, or “members” applying it? To what extent does the learning “stick” once subject to the vagaries of partnership and multi-project programmes?

This would be a highly important area to study as it would also consider issues about whether disparate partnerships and “bottom-up” programmes can learn. It is possible, though, that the practical difficulties would have overwhelmed the study as each programme chosen would have numerous projects and stakeholders, and there would be a research dilemma between exploring each programme in sufficient depth and exploring a sufficient breadth of programmes to construct a representative sample.

Each of the four possible research questions could have opened up a whole field of further potential questions and it was necessary to define an achievable area of research. After considerable preliminary work using

theoretical sources, checking on the availability of the published evaluations and discussing the matter with practitioners I considered the four possible research questions. In general research terms all four questions require exploration but Question One was ruled out by the limitations of a PhD study programme. Question Two is weak because the answer is strongly indicated in the negative already and was in danger of imposing retrospective values, as a reason for ruling out much practice, therefore masking the actuality of what was or was not achieved.

The questions that relate to mechanisms and effects appear to hold more possibility for PhD scale original research. The fourth question had great potential for analysis of the issue of how disparate partnerships and “bottom-up” programmes learn. If the right balance between number partnerships/programmes studied (breadth) and depth of study of each case could be achieved a very worthwhile piece of original research would have been possible, but not within the limitations of a PhD research study.

The third question approaches the subject from a more easily delimited stand-point. By researching the specific transitions between programmes over a set period of time a combination of research of written documentation and interviews would be possible. The outcome of this would be to discover what the essential ingredients were for learning between successive programmes, and whether it appeared that these were in place from a sample of programmes.

It therefore appeared that the third question: “To what extent were explicit or implicit mechanisms in place, and used, to ensure that learning was transferred from one programme to the next?” was the one most likely to form the central thrust of successful PhD studies, particularly in view of the need to complete worthwhile research, with a substantial original element, on time.

Question Three was also chosen because it was the only one that met the criteria established in section 1.3 above:

- There was a clear original research task with the likelihood of some valuable results achievable within the scope of a PhD.
- There was official documentary evidence in the form of published evaluations.
- There were likely to be sufficient participants from the programmes in question available for interview.

### **1.5 The research proposal.**

The proposal is to focus on contemporary issues in the evaluation of urban regeneration programmes and in particular address the question of learning transfer. The main question to be researched is to what extent contemporary regeneration programmes have been informed by the learning of lessons from the evaluation of previous English urban regeneration programmes.

The research hypothesis is: “that there is no evidence that learning takes place between regeneration programmes”. A null hypothesis has been chosen in part because of the researcher’s experience (as set out in Section 1.2 above) and also because of the nature of a stakeholder research process where it was felt that interviews would be more productive if they were participating in a search for the positive. A desktop exercise along with pilot interviews informed the research question and design and identified a gap in knowledge related to the actual transfer of learning from one English regeneration programme to the next.



While evaluations have been taking place some considerable questions remain:

- Were lessons identified during, and after, the programme?
- What evidence is there that the lessons are being learnt?
- Is the process documented and who is ensuring that appropriate learning takes place?
- Whatever the intentions, could a transfer of learning have taken place given the chronology of the various regeneration programmes and the constantly changing policy framework and other contextual factors?
- Did individuals, despite any policy or procedural weaknesses that existed, still feel that they or others managed to learn or pass on lessons to others?

In this PhD research I have tried to discover the answers to these questions so that the hypothesis can be tested. This has involved understanding and co-relating theory in terms of how people and organisations learn (in Chapter Three); the ways in which the changes in the forms and style of governance have changed the context for learning (in Chapter Four); and how the practice of evaluation has evolved (in Chapter Five). These theoretical considerations are then synthesised with the study of official documents and the case studies (in Chapter Eight).



## **Chapter Two - Research methodology and definitions.**

### **2.1 Introduction to the chapter.**

This chapter starts by setting out the research methods used, with justification for the key choices made and some illustrations of the theoretical and conceptual problems addressed in designing this study.

The methodology is shown in Table One and then described in summary in Table Two. It was developed after a literature search and period of preliminary research with pilot interviews. This was to ensure that the research would be viable with a substantial original contribution to knowledge that meets the PhD regulations and will also be of interest to scholars and practitioners. The methodology is based on a pattern of intensive literature search leading to the selection of fourteen programmes for more detailed study. Tools were developed to analyse this sample and draw both conclusions and further questions for the next stage, which was based on four case studies.

This chapter then describes how, by the use of case studies the original research was developed. This included interviewing contemporary practitioners from the case study programmes and obtaining multiple perspectives on each programme which are used to test and challenge the written evidence. Finally, the research methodology included the synthesis of all the data gathered along with the theory and official documentation to draw conclusions.

## **Table One: Research methodology**

### **The research hypothesis:**

“That there is no evidence that learning takes place between regeneration programmes”.



### **Testing the hypothesis: selection and development of research techniques.**

Theory - Evaluation document analysis against criteria - Case studies  
Synthesis and conclusions.



### **Theory.**

Definitions – Evolution – Context.  
Insight – Contestation – Learning.  
Develop criteria for document analysis.



### **Evaluation document analysis.**

Search for published evaluations.  
Assess against criteria - Draw conclusions about trends.  
Identify questions unanswered.



### **Case studies.**

4 programmes - 15 stakeholders - In-depth interviews.



### **Synthesis and conclusions.**

Draw together theory, document analysis and case studies.  
Test against the hypothesis.

**Table Two: Summarised Research Methodology**

**Pilot Stage.** As part of the process of defining the research question a literature review and pilot interviews were undertaken to establish the necessary and practical scope of the research, the availability of sources and interviewees and the extent to which the proposed research was original.

**Stage One - Defining terms (Chapter Three).**

The various definitions of the terms “regeneration”, “evaluation” and “transfer of learning” have been explored.

**Stage Two - Reviewing the changing governmental context and the constantly evolving nature of regeneration programmes (Chapter Four).**

The research explores how the changes of governments, political ideologies, and modes of governance have affected both the context in which evaluation has operated and the nature of evaluation itself.

**Stage Three - Understanding the origins of evaluation in regeneration and its different purposes (Chapter Five).**

The research then explored the history of evaluation as a tool, its origins, and the different uses to which it has been put over time. The emergence and development of evaluation theory and techniques was extensively researched and an understanding of the range of philosophies, purposes, and aims of evaluation has been developed. Typologies have been collected including the strengths and weaknesses of different techniques and philosophical approaches.

**Stage Four - An analysis of evaluation in practice (Chapter Six).**

An in-depth review examining the evaluation methods applied to a set of regeneration programmes; this stage was based on a series of prioritised questions emerging from Stages One and Two for example; what are the principal components and features? To whom are they accountable? What performance measures are used? How are the lessons integrated into the programme or subsequent programmes? To what extent are the various stakeholders involved?

**Stage Five - Case studies based on stakeholder interviews (Chapter Seven).**

This stage involved testing the documentary analysis with stakeholders. Case studies based on stakeholder interviews from each of four programmes were conducted. This included a process of checking and judgement based on triangulation of the data from Stage Three with the data gained in this stage which enabled conclusions to be drawn about the actuality of the extent of evaluation and the transfer of learning.

**Stage Six - Synthesis, analysis, and conclusions**

Considering the inputs from theory, contemporary debate, interviews and analysis the research drew together useful conclusions for practice and areas for further research and theoretical considerations about the role and impact of evaluation in regeneration.



## **2.2 Pilot stage.**

In order to formulate a viable research question and to develop a sound methodology a pilot phase was conducted. This included a preliminary document search, an assessment of the main themes arising from the media and two trial interviews. The pilot interviews assisted in the design of questions for the stakeholder interviews and also help to validate the choice of a semi-structured interview approach.

## **2.3 Research Stage One: Understanding the origins of evaluation.**

In order to be able to understand, and to comment on, the role of evaluation it is necessary, not just to attempt to define what is meant by “evaluation”, but also to be aware of how evaluation as an art, science, or practice has emerged into this arena of public policy.

Chapter Five, therefore, looks back at the early recorded or formalised uses of the term evaluation and considers if the way in which the practice of evaluation has emerged has affected how it has been viewed or used by practitioners and other stakeholders. It is possible that the use of evaluation tools in one field of social policy was appropriate and useful but when transferred to another field it may be inappropriate or unhelpful. The nature of regeneration interventions (short term, usually area-based and often challenge based) makes them different from many other public programmes. It is important to consider this when understanding how, when and why evaluations took place and whether they contributed to the transfer of learning.

The research activities included reading the history of evaluation as a set of tools and practices, its origins, the different uses to which it has been put over time. It also included researching the development of regeneration programmes and therefore the context in which evaluation has been applied. This has been based on a literature search going back as far as the 1920s to

find the first references to evaluation (in United States literature). To ensure that this research has been methodical web-site searches have been undertaken of academic and professional institutions that are leaders in the subject (including for example the Aspen Institute, Joseph Rowntree Research Foundation, Charities Evaluation Services and University of Glasgow). In addition the major encyclopaedic texts on research methods (including evaluation) have been scrutinised and are referred to below.

There have been many attempts in literature to create typologies of evaluation and group evaluation activities and theories. These range from Aaronovitch's (Townley and Wilks-Heeg 1999: 27-41) typology which is quite specific in its definitions through to broader assemblages of concepts such as the "four generations of evaluation" (Guba and Lincoln 1989: 124) and these are discussed below in Chapter Five.

#### **2.4 Research Stage Two: Understanding the uses of evaluation in regeneration, its different purposes, and how learning may take place.**

In the pilot research phase, which was undertaken to test the proposed research question, it quickly became clear that, whatever the definition of regeneration, it was a tool or process that was applied in many different ways for many different purposes. The research question seeks an answer to one possible outcome of evaluation that is, transference of learning, but many other possible outcomes have come to light and these are set out below in this chapter and discussed further in Chapter Five.

The importance of this is that in judging evaluation efforts the motives and purposes need to be, at least, recognised as being broader than the research topic. If, for example, an evaluation is conducted simply because it was a funding requirement and the programme has closed down and all the actors involved have moved on there is likely to be less emphasis on creating a transfer of learning than if a programme has its own local independent and



ongoing evaluation throughout its life as, for example, with the Children's Fund and Sure Start programmes.

To achieve an understanding of the variety and complexity of evaluation in practice in English urban regeneration programmes a literature search was undertaken which included studying the assumptions, assertions and conclusions of theorists and the stated purposes of evaluation from official documentation. This evidence was both challenged and further illustrated by the questions in the stakeholder interviews. The outcome of this is an understanding of the complexity of the evaluation ecology and a warning that any conclusions drawn will be conditional.

The question of how people and organisations learn is also crucial to testing the hypothesis. After consulting the University of Westminster Educational Initiatives Centre for guidance on the relevant literature this study has applied an understanding of the basic theories of learning and in particular how learning takes place in many ways. An approach was developed which drew up criteria for detecting the transfer of learning and this also helped develop the questions for the case study interviews and in the analysis of the content of the interview results.

Evaluation studies have been used as an indicator of the learning process as they are the only accessible official source that is consistently available for the whole study period. However the study sought further evidence and, where possible confirmation, that learning actually took place and furthermore that learning was transferred between programmes.



## **2.5 Research Stage Three: A typology of evaluations.**

While this study has demonstrated that there are many different uses to which evaluation is applied, there are equally many types of evaluation activities and indeed there is currently enormous growth in the range of approaches or styles. A research challenge has been to consider to what extent the type of evaluation undertaken affects the outcome of transference of learning.

A range of possible approaches have been considered in designing the research methodology. It would have been possible, for example, to adopt a purist approach and state that if inadequate methods of evaluation had been used then transfer of learning would not be possible because reliable lessons would not have been learnt. In considering this approach the difficulty is encountered that the adequacy or otherwise of methods is itself a matter for debate that cannot be resolved in a PhD thesis. The research methodology, therefore, has adopted the approach of documenting the various types of evaluation and their attributes as understood by the theorists and the researcher. The strengths and weaknesses of their technique or approach are then factored into the stakeholder interviews and the analysis and synthesis stages of this research to assist in drawing conclusions.

The typology section (Chapter Five) is a review of typologies and their analysis and a listing of evaluation types. Initially it was intended to attempt to group the types into general categories and, using criticism and theory set out their applicability to different sets of circumstances. However there are too many different types and they are not always comparable because evaluation covers such a wide span of public policy. The Chapter therefore documents the range and identifies a typology for use as part of the assessment of the documented evaluations in Chapter Seven.

## **2.6 Research Stage Four: An analysis of evaluation in practice.**

Central to the research methodology is the interface between the evaluation processes and practices and the human practitioners who would assimilate any lessons learnt and potentially translate them into practice. There are therefore two key areas of study: Programme evaluations and the human and organisational responses to them.

There have been numerous regeneration initiatives in post-war Britain and abroad covering a wide range of topics and varying from large ten year programmes to small challenge funds and across the full topic range from estate renewal through to garden festivals. To conduct useful studies within the scope of a PhD it was very important to identify clearly which set of programmes it would be necessary to study in order to arrive at defensible answers in terms of the representativeness of the programmes, availability of data and the manageable workload. Before narrowing down to a manageable number of programmes to research in detail, it was necessary to look more broadly across the picture of regeneration programmes generally to see what could be learnt from documented practice. This chapter explains why the following scope of the research was decided upon: That the programmes should be regeneration programmes; that the programmes should be area-based initiatives and; that the programmes should have documented evaluations available.

“Regeneration” is a vague term used by many people to describe many things ranging from moral to physical regeneration (as discussed in Chapter Three). Indeed, Tricart (Alterman 1991: 189) is quoted below as regarding “evaluation” as being a “suitably imprecise term” and the same could be said about “regeneration”. Notwithstanding the difficulties, an important first task was to define the term that was being used in this study and this is undertaken in Chapter Three. After a review of theory and government documentation, area-based initiatives were selected as one of the criteria for selecting programmes for study. The selection of area-based initiatives has been a way of drawing a distinction between regeneration initiatives and



mainstream services. There was little evidence of mainstream programmes being evaluated in public (at least when this study started) whereas area-based initiatives have been consistently evaluated to a greater or lesser extent. The selection of area-based initiatives as part of the definition of “regeneration” for this study turned out to be fortuitous as the effectiveness of the area – based approach has come under increasing scrutiny as this study has developed (Tyler 2002a).

It was also necessary to arrive at a territorial limitation on the study as different jurisdictions even within the United Kingdom have arrived at different approaches and terminologies with parallel sets of guidance and forms of practice. To attempt to draw lessons from other United Kingdom jurisdictions and foreign territories would have created a research task that was not achievable within the rules and timescales of a PhD. It may also have obscured the answer to the research question, as the extent to which the transfer of learning took place may be different in different territories. The research parameters were therefore set to include only England in the primary research but not to exclude other experience as appropriate to the question located in the English context.

The methodology used for this task was to examine the evaluation methods applied to a large set of nineteen regeneration programmes based on programmes identified in two key texts: Robson *et al* (DOE 1994a) and the Social Exclusion Unit (1998b). The inclusion of these was determined to be essential at least at a summary level, for the research to stand the test of completeness. Of these programmes a literature review was undertaken to establish which of these had published evaluations, as the next stage of the research required there to be documentary evidence that was amenable to analysis. From the long list of programmes that were initially highlighted fourteen were chosen for more detailed study. The fourteen chosen all have documented evaluations and spanned most of the last thirty years. They provided the basic data set for the first stage of analysis including the application of an Evaluation Assessment Framework which was developed as part of this study. Table Three gives the reasons for these choices:



**Table Three: Programme evaluations examined as potential research subjects.**

*Legend: Shaded entries show the programmes selected for the evaluation assessment framework. Dark shaded entries show the four programmes used as case studies. In the case of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund this was used as case study but was not assessed using the evaluation assessment framework because documents had not yet been published.*

Programme	Sources	Action/Comments
City Challenge.	Final and interim national evaluations are available.	Selected as a case study.
City Grant.	Published programme evaluation available.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Coalfield Regeneration	In-programme evaluation available.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Community Development Programmes.	A series of Home Office reports on both the area programmes and themes are available.	These were examined but were ruled out due to the nature of these studies as research into the social conditions of the areas rather than evaluation of the interventions of urban policy.
Cross-programme.	Reports by the National Audit Office, The Treasury and House of Commons and House of Lords Select Committees and the Urban Task Force provide additional research materials.	Useful additional background available from The Stationery Office, the Internet and the House of Commons Library. These were used quite heavily in this study.
English Partnerships.	National Audit Office evaluation and report to House of Commons Select Committee.	Not included as these studies were more focussed on the organisational effectiveness rather than the effectiveness of programmes themselves.
Enterprise zones.	Published programme evaluation available.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Garden Festivals.	DOE Inner Cities Research Programme evaluation.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Housing Action Trusts.	DETR evaluation available.	Selected for documentary analysis.



<b>Programme</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Action/Comments</b>
Industrial and Commercial Improvement Areas.	Published programme evaluation available Inner City Research Programme.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Inner City Task Force.	Full reports of a study by PA Cambridge Economic Consultants.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.	Published evaluations and evaluation frameworks.	Selected as a case study.
New Commitment to Regeneration	In-programme evaluation available.	Selected for documentary analysis.
New Deal for Communities.	Interim evaluations are available.	Selected as a case study.
Safer Cities.	Evaluations of phases 1 and 2 complete. Themed evaluations for example, effect on home burglaries are also available. Inter-net in particular Home Office Web-site: (www.homeoffice.gov.uk).	These were scrutinised as they are area-based initiatives and crime and security is frequently a priority for regeneration areas however it was felt that they were not regeneration programmes in their own right
Single Regeneration Budget.	A final and a number of interim and thematic evaluations were identified.	Selected as a case study.
Urban Development Corporations.	Four Urban Development Corporations programmes were evaluated by the Centre for Urban Policy Studies and there is a full evaluation of the London Docklands Development Corporation. Thematic studies and National Audit Office reports available.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Urban Development Grant.	Final evaluation and thematic studies (for example, Employment) are available.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Urban Programme (cross cutting review).	Robson <i>et al</i> (DOE 1994a) covers this extensively and provide a wide range of references.	Selected for documentary analysis.
Urban Regeneration Companies.	Report by Amion Consulting on lessons from pilots available on the Inter-net. (www.amion.co.uk).	This initiative and its evaluation emerged too late for this research.



Having selected the programmes for more detailed study a logical and replicable method of analysing and describing their attributes needed to be developed. Documentary analysis is discussed by Duffy (in Bell 1999: 116-117) who suggests that there are two approaches to documentary analysis: the first is 'source orientated' and the second is 'problem orientated'. In selecting a research approach it was important to be clear about which approach is being adopted in order to have an appropriate and effective methodology. This research was aligned with the problem orientated approach in as much as the widespread background research (of what Duffy refers to as secondary sources) had indicated that the only way to answer the questions highlighted by theory was to assess the primary documents.

In order to ascertain the nature of the evaluations and the likelihood of the transfer of learning having taken place, published evaluations for each of the programmes were studied. In some cases it was also useful to draw from theory, for example where the evaluations were limited and highly contested such as those of the Urban Development Corporations (For example Imrie and Thomas 1999). The report of the Urban Task Force (Social Exclusion Unit 1999) and the Department of the Environment study on the Impact of the Urban Programme (Robson *et al* 1994) were also studied as they contain much on the topic.

The evaluation documents themselves, even though they were mainly government commissioned studies, were not to any standard pattern and so an assessment framework (see Appendix Two) was developed that could be applied to them all. Verma and Beard (1981: 10) describe the need for researchers to: "identify and explain the relationship between the facts". The issues emerging from the literature review and the basic ingredients needed for this research were used to design the assessment framework.



The following key issues were investigated:

- The method used and its operational components, this was to enable it to be set against the typology;
- The stated purposes, this was to help inform the motivation for the evaluation;
- Who commissioned the evaluation and to whom they are accountable? This element was documented as there is an increasing body of theory that evaluation, to be effective, needs to be commissioned and controlled independently of those that are funding the programmes. Bryman for example, found organisational resistance to external evaluation to be a real difficulty facing independent researchers. Bryman also refers, in discussion about Urban Development Corporations, to “degradation of monitoring and evaluation exercises into boosterism” because they have been commissioned and controlled by the body whose performance is being evaluated (Bryman 1988: 125);
- The forms of measurement and performance indicators used. This helps to illustrate whether there are relevant and replicable measures being used and also whether the measures used are related to the concerns of those that might wish to learn from such evaluations. Hotchkiss *et al* (1999) demonstrate that indicators have to be analysed for their efficacy in their context;
- The level and type of stakeholder involvement, this is documented because the level of stakeholder involvement is regarded by the Government and many commentators as being a pre-requisite for successful evaluation. For example Hastings *et al* (1996) suggest that community involvement should be at every stage of the process;

- The timing of the evaluation (that is, in-programme, post-hoc etc) was documented because one of the challenges to the transfer of learning has been identified in this research as being the sequence between one programme starting and the previous one being evaluated;
- Who undertook the evaluation? This was documented to see if any pattern emerged between those that were contracted to undertake the evaluation and the extent to which lessons were learnt and transferred;
- Extent of integration of the evaluation to the programme's operations, this was examined as the research has shown that the recent and current trend is for there to be an insistence on in-programme evaluation as well as post-hoc;
- Arrangements for feedback from the evaluation to the funders and other stakeholders. These were studied as they represent a structured opportunity for learning to take place and possible signposts to evidence that learning took place at the time;
- Evidence that lessons have been learnt from previous evaluations. This was to document the written evidence that learning took place to provide the platform of knowledge from which the research would then have to investigate (with interviews and by adducing matters from texts) whether lessons had in fact been learnt and change resulted from them.

The outcome is the matrix showing the typology of evaluations analysed for their main features and uses. Table Four illustrates this:

**Table Four: The stated purposes behind the selected evaluation exercises**

<b>Programme/Stated purposes of evaluation.</b>	<b>Methods of implementation / compare practice.</b>	<b>Impact and effectiveness.</b>	<b>Examine response of private sector</b>	<b>Effect on neighbouring authorities</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Transfer learning</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Financial</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
<b>Industrial and Commercial Improvement Area.</b>	Methods of implementation. Compare practice.	Impact and effectiveness	Examine response of private sector.	Effect on neighbouring authorities.			Stabilise economic life of area.		
<b>Urban Programme environmental projects.</b>	Methods of implementation.	Benefits from different types of expenditure.	Benefits to businesses		Distribution of benefits.			Value for Money.	
<b>Enterprise Zones.</b>		Economic benefits and benefits from environmental improvements	Stimulate property markets.					Leverage.	
<b>National Garden Festival.</b>	Compare practice.							Cost effectiveness	
<b>European Social Fund.</b>		Effect on achievement of projects' own objectives regeneration. of wider area.				Recommendations for future policy.			
<b>City Challenge.</b>	Identify good practice. Costs and benefits of competition.	Assess achievements. Did use of outputs affect programme?		Fit with broader strategy of local authority.	Appropriateness of target area, mechanisms for targeting benefits.	Identification of success factors and transferable lessons.	Effects of it being a time limited programme.		Effects of partnership working.



Programme	Methods of implementation	Impact and effectiveness	Examine response of private sector	Effect on neighbouring authorities	Beneficiaries	Transfer learning	Sustainability	Financial	Community involvement
Housing Action Trusts.	How have programmes been formulated. What management strategies are in place.	Costs and benefits of different approaches.			Benefits to tenants.	Lesson to be learnt.	Sustainability.	Value for money.	Keeping interest of tenants and community development .
Inner City Task Force.	Which methods have been successful and why.	Effectiveness .				Advise local partnerships on implementation and develop the evidence base for future regeneration. Policy.	Assess long term impact.	Cost effectiveness and costs and benefits.	
New Deal for Communities.	Yes.	Impact and effectiveness			Yes	Yes.	Yes.	Value for money.	Yes very strongly.
Urban Regeneration Companies.	Yes.	Attribute impacts.				Provide policy and practice lessons.	Progress towards long term goals.	Value for money. Evaluation to be cost effective in own right.	Provide performance info to stakeholders.
Single Regeneration Budget.	Which forms of delivery optimise what can be achieved?	What local projects work on the ground?			Evidence that spatial targeting is best way of addressing needs?				

By examining both documentation and theory it is possible to draw inferences from practice about whether the transfer of learning has taken place. However the pilot research revealed that there is limited documentation as to what, in fact, happened. Therefore a stakeholder research stage was needed that obtained the recollections of those involved at the time to determine five things:

- Were lessons identified during, and after, the programme?
- What evidence is there that lessons are being learnt?
- Is the process documented and who is ensuring that appropriate learning takes place?
- Whatever the intentions, could a transfer of learning have taken place given the chronology of the various regeneration programmes and the constantly changing policy framework and other contextual factors?
- Did individuals, despite any policy or procedural weaknesses that existed, still feel that they or others managed to learn or pass on lessons to others?

The method used was to select a sample of the programmes studied in Stage Four and develop them further by means of stakeholder interviews to establish the extent of transfer of learning by asking those involved. The sample chosen was based on using the following criteria: That the programme was significantly important and widespread in terms of its application to be representative or at least a good indicator of what conditions might be in a general sense; that the programme was sufficiently non-specialist that the learning from it would be meaningful in terms of regeneration programmes as a whole; that there were a sufficient number of willing and able stakeholders from the time of the programme being studied and available to interview (to ascertain this pilot interviews and initial

contacts were made with potential interviewees). Content analysis is applied to the interview results.

Findings on the overall research question and each case study have thus been compiled and set out in Chapter Seven based on:

- The information gathered in Stages One, Two and Three.
- Completed evaluation reports as analysed in Stage Four.
- Critical reviews of these reports.
- Interviews with stakeholders with inputs from government officers, council officers, programme managers, project officers and community representatives.

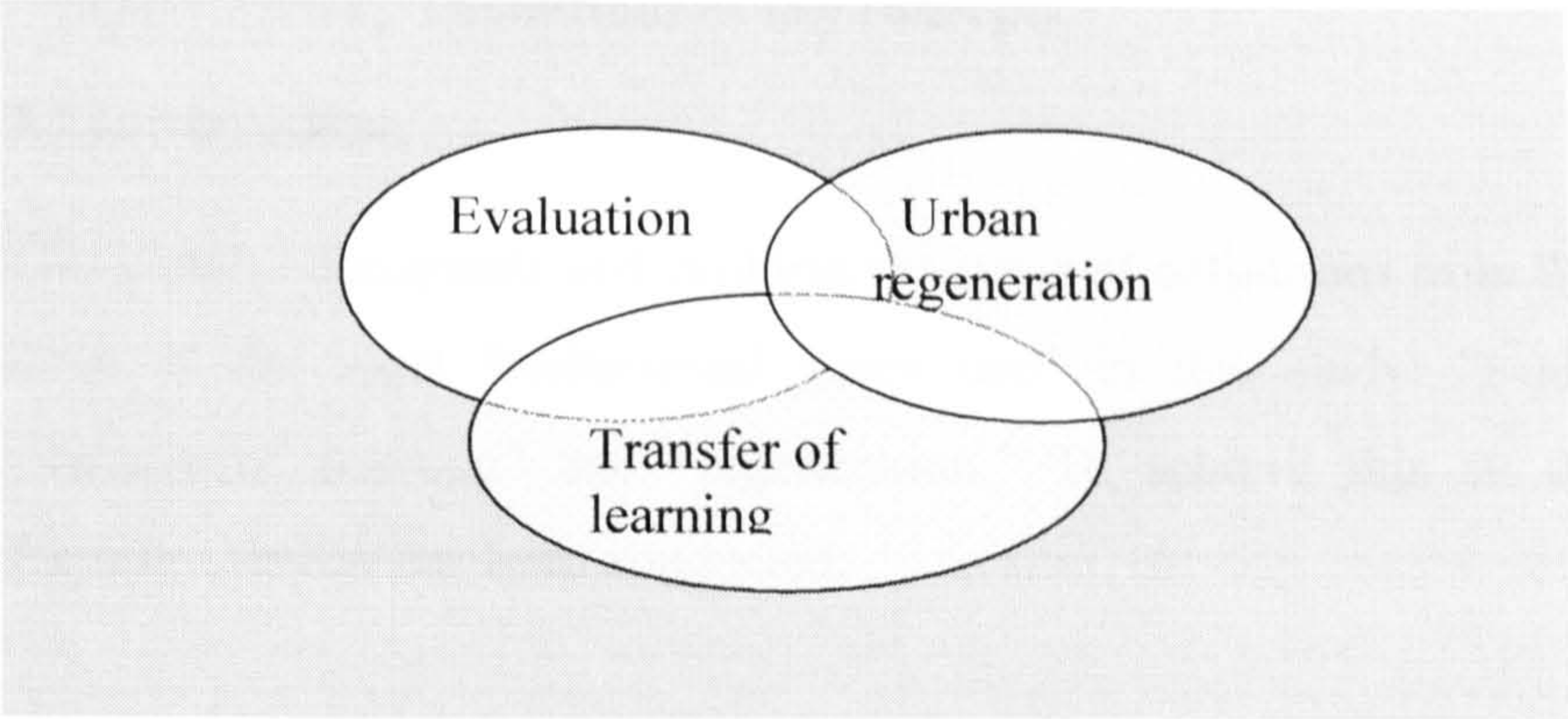
These case studies were designed to provide a basis for drawing further conclusions about the research question. They also had the potential to highlight areas where more research may be useful to enable further conclusions to be drawn concerning the development, application, and operation of evaluation across regeneration programmes over the study period.

## **2.7 The key research sources.**

In the pilot stage an audit was undertaken to establish that there would be sufficient authoritative documentary sources for the proposed research. This followed a “literature search model” as outlined by Baker (1999: 67) the main sub-topic areas were identified as “evaluation”, “urban regeneration” and “transfer of learning.” A target area for the literature search was set as the point of overlap between these sub-topics. However, it was also necessary to follow sub-topics into their discrete disciplines for some aspects of this research for example, the evolution of evaluation. Table Five illustrates the literature search model:



**Table Five: Literature search model.**



Source: Baker (1999: 67).

One key element of the literature search was the existence and accessibility of the main urban regeneration programme evaluation reports. Table Three (above) summarises the findings, which confirmed that the sources existed and could be readily accessed for most of the principal regeneration programmes.

**2.8 Conclusions on the methodology.**

Developing a suitable methodology was very challenging because of the vast range of the three topics of “evaluation”, “urban regeneration” and “transfer of learning”. Nevertheless a methodology has been constructed based on approach that triangulates theory, official documentation, and stakeholder interviews. The next chapter develops this approach by exploring the key definitions in more detail.

## **Chapter Three – Definitions of key concepts.**

### **3.1 Introduction.**

This chapter documents and explores the range of definitions from theory for three of the most fundamental terms used in this study: “evaluation”; “transfer of learning” and “regeneration.” To achieve this an extensive literature review has been conducted.

“Evaluation” is a key term in this research because evaluation reports have been commissioned consistently throughout the study period and represent an apparent key means of learning. The term has been found to be a widely used term often overlapping with other terms such as “appraisal”. It has not been possible to settle on one definition because the art or science of evaluation itself has been constantly evolving and has many definitions from many writers with different viewpoints.

Learning has been a subject area that requires considerable thought and explanation. The research hypothesis does not restrict the “transfer of learning” to that which arises from any formal “evaluation” and, for example, in the case study research reported in Chapter Seven interviewees have re-inforced the view that evaluation is only one contributory element to the “transfer of learning”.

In the same way “regeneration” is not a term with a fixed meaning and this chapter presents some of the range of definitions. This chapter also attempts to define how “transfer of learning” might be recognised and judged and draws on the work of Winch (2001: 183) to recognise that while there is no single grand theory there are key themes that inform understanding of how learning takes place in practice. Because of this complexity, and the great variety of stakeholders being interviewed, Patton’s (1997) checklist has been used to help frame the questions for which answers are sought from the documentary and interview evidence.



### **3.2 Definitions of evaluation.**

In order to better understand what is being investigated, the following definitions of evaluation have been collected to illustrate the spectrum of views about evaluation. It can be seen that there is a vast range of meanings and usages for the term. These are reviewed in this chapter and in subsequent chapters some of the consequences for the research are drawn out.

The first set of definitions relate to evaluation as being synonymous with tests, appraisal or assessment. These definitions come from the field of “rational” town planning and it is therefore unsurprising that they regard evaluation as a technical tool. Chadwick (1978: 260-279) in his seminal work on planning regards evaluation as having a key role in a “cyclical” approach to all the tests in a “rational” planning system including: feasibility; effectiveness; level of performance; resources; conservation; incidence and uncertainty. Chadwick had a systems view of planning and it is logical that he would view evaluation as involving systematic tools or tests. Lichfield (1996: 177) has a more limited view of evaluation and states that he prefers to use the term evaluation “and its synonyms, ‘appraisal’ and ‘assessment’ to just one in the array of tests in the planning system, namely that used to compare the inputs and outputs of a plan or project options”. He notes that, in current regeneration parlance, “appraisal” has developed a special meaning of ‘trying to assess in advance whether a project or programme will work’ (this is defined by Lichfield as ex-ante that is, in advance of choosing).

Lichfield (1996: 177) also states that “there is also ex-post testing evaluation, termed ‘programme review’”. This is the situation where an evaluation is commissioned as the programme ends for example: the Garden Festivals programme evaluation (DOE 1990b). In this case post-hoc review may have been appropriate as the Garden Festivals were a series of one-off events. It is likely to be less appropriate (as shown in Chapter Six) where the evaluations are conducted too late to influence the ongoing programmes and even capture the necessary data.

Lichfield (1996: 177) also warns that: “although evaluation is a technical process it is infused with value judgements, both of the analyst and also the decision-takers” he lists possible areas of value judgement: the level and nature of intervention being considered; the options included; which elements of the community and stakeholders are engaged with; the judgements made about rankings; equity criteria. Suchman (1967: 29) defines evaluation as being interchangeable with assessment, appraisal or judgement and refers to it as “the general process of judging worthwhileness of some activity regardless of the method employed”. He also (Suchman 1967: 7) defines evaluative research as “the application of scientific research methods and techniques for the purpose of making an evaluation”.

Shaw portrays the scientific and robust nature of evaluation even more strongly: “The use of the scientific method, and the rigorous and systematic collection of research data to assess the effectiveness of organisations, services, and programmes ... in achieving predefined objectives” (Shaw 1980: 1256-8).

The above definitions tend towards the rational and mechanistic with limited explicit reference to stakeholders and qualitative judgements. They allow for evaluation to be conducted either as an ex-ante appraisal (to predict if an intervention is likely to be successful) or as a post-hoc review.

However post-hoc checking does not need to mean after the programme ends; post-hoc review work can be undertaken at different completed stages. As examples, all the recent major programmes for example; City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget and New Deal for Communities, were found to have interim evaluations. Regeneration programmes lend themselves to reviews of stages because they usually have annual delivery programmes and review periods.



The Treasury supports the view that evaluation is post-hoc and likens it to economic appraisal:

Evaluation examines the outturn of a policy, programme, or project against what was expected, and is designed to ensure that the lessons learned are fed back into the decision-making process. This ensures that government action is continually refined to reflect what best achieves objectives and promotes the public interest. Evaluation comprises a robust analysis, conducted in the same manner as an economic appraisal, and to which almost identical procedures apply. It focuses on conducting a cost benefit analysis, in the knowledge of what actually occurred rather than what is forecast to happen (HM Treasury 2003: 45).

Roberts and Sykes lend support to evaluation as a post-hoc activity and give the following definition:

The process of checking (after implementation) to see how far objectives have been achieved, what resources have been used and what outputs have been produced; it is also helpful to identify good and poor practice and to isolate what lessons can be learnt for the future (also called ex-post evaluation or ex-post review) (Roberts and Sykes 2000: 226).

This approach was found by this study to be prevalent in the earlier programmes. More recently in-programme evaluation has been required by funders as set out in the findings in Chapter Six below.

Tricart suggests a potential difficulty in defining evaluation. His theory is that evaluation is used in modern urban policy precisely because it is a vague term that can mean different things to different actors.

Tricart suggests:

The reason why the word “evaluation” is used so much to the point that it has become the key word of social policy in the 1980s is that its significance remains imprecise and can encompass a whole range of diverse meanings corresponding to the many expectations and concerns of social policies (Alterman 1991: 189).

One distinction that has been made very clear is that evaluation is more than simply recording what has taken place, there must be some value or critique attached to it. This is explained by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit on its web-site:

Evaluation is vital to assess and improve the impact of your strategy. It differs from monitoring in that it looks critically at what has been achieved as a result of the NDC and also at why things went well or badly. It must be an integral part of both scheme and project management (NRU: 2006b)

Evaluation therefore requires effective monitoring to have taken place but then adds the elements of analysis, value and critique. This is explained by Sharp who states that:

Monitoring and evaluation go hand in hand. Monitoring is the routine and ongoing collection of information about your activities, services, or users. Evaluation is the more intentional, in-depth, bringing together of the information to answer questions about the differences our activities are making. Evaluation is not just asking ‘did that work’ but about developing a more nuanced judgement about what’s working well or less well, and for whom (Sharp 2004: 14).

This element of judgement seems to be a key distinguishing factor. The Charities Evaluation Services (2002: 1) for example, suggest that: “although monitoring and evaluation work hand in hand you need to distinguish



between them”. They go on to describe evaluation as being about making judgements against specific criteria. It cannot therefore be considered simply an audit process. Bowling introduces the concept that evaluation looks at causation: “Evaluation is more than audit because it aims to record not only what changes occur but what led to those changes... can be divided into two types: formative and summative” (Bowling 2002: 9). This has been crystallised in “Theory of Change” evaluation which is discussed in Chapter Five.

Regeneration programmes are often national schemes with local area-based programmes. These programmes usually deliver by means of time limited projects. Therefore evaluation can take place at many levels. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit suggests a distinction between project and scheme evaluation and suggests that evaluation is a post-hoc activity for projects:

Project evaluation happens after the end of a project and looks specifically at the impact of that individual project. Critical evaluations of your scheme as a whole and the contribution of individual projects must be carried out at the end of year 3, year 6 and the end of the scheme (DETR 2000b: 13).

Rossi recognises the variety of applications for evaluation and has a more general approach which includes post-hoc, in programme and ex-ante evaluation with a clear implication that improvement is sought and that a wide range of inputs are relevant. His definition is:

The use of social science knowledge, research strategies, and research methods to provide sound empirical information to aid in the design, improvement and assessment or purposive communal actions. It draws on all basic social science fields and related applied fields (Rossi 1999: 521-567).

Patton also regards (programme) evaluation as a tool which, if used by the right people should inform decision-making and improve results:

Programme evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programmes for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions with regard to what those people are doing and affecting (Patton 1986: 14).

A key text is the Evaluation Thesaurus which identifies four possible different senses of the term evaluation: “The key sense refers to the process of determining the merit, worth or value of something” (Scriven 1991: 138-143). He then lists the terms used to refer to this process (or part of it) as:

Appraise, analyse, assess, critique, examine, grade, inspect, judge, rate, rank, review, study, test. Normally involves some identification of relative standards of merit, worth or value, some investigation of the performance of evaluands on these standards and some integration or synthesis of the results to achieve an overall evaluation...(Scriven 1991: 138-143).

Scriven contrasts evaluation with measurement as measurement is “purely descriptive” and “uni-dimensional”, evaluation involves the integration process and is sometimes judgemental, evaluation often acquires power because of its ties to possible action by decision-makers but more generally because of its potential threat to self-esteem”. Scriven also draws another distinction which is to multi-disciplinary nature of evaluation:

Refers to the study and application of procedures for doing objective and systematic evaluation distinguished from traditional empirical research, literary criticism, criminalistics or investigative reporting, partly by its extra-ordinary multi-disciplinary nature” (Scriven 1991: 138-143).



Scriven also seeks to debunk the idea that evaluation is “Sometimes, and unfortunately, used more narrowly to mean only the work done by professional evaluators.” (Scriven 1991: 138-143). He also suggests a relationship with cost benefit analysis: “Also used in mathematics to mean ‘calculate the value of an expression’ – for example of a polynomial, similar to cost benefit analysis.” (Scriven 1991: 138-143).

Scriven’s approach is supported by that of Everitt (1996: 73-188) who states that “Evaluation is about generating evidence of practice and its effectiveness, importantly it is about making judgements about the value of practice informed by such evidence” and Phillips *et al* (1994) who neatly joins the measurement and judgement roles: “Evaluation is concerned with judging merit against some yardstick”. The value-based approach is reinforced by McCollam and White:

“Evaluation is about constructing explanations for what takes place and making judgements about the value of what takes place relative to clearly articulated criteria. It is concerned with the impact or effect of an activity, event, or piece of work usually in relation to specified objectives” (CES 2002: 3).

Roberts and Sykes share the view that judgements are important and describe the purposes of monitoring and evaluation as being:

- To check the progress of a project or programme against specified targets in a systematic and transparent manner;
- To inform the review or revision of the original targets and actions;
- To arrive at a judgement overall of the outputs of the scheme and the added value (or additionality) it brings (Roberts and Sykes 2000: 6).

It is also important to consider the motivations behind evaluation which inform the ways in which evaluation is defined. There is a view that evaluation is used simply to justify a course of action, this could be read into Fink’s (1993: 12) definition which states that “program evaluation aims to

provide convincing evidence that a programme is effective. The standards are the specific criteria by which effectiveness is measured”. In the funding-led environment of urban regeneration programmes it is usually necessary to justify expenditure for continued funding and evaluation is often relied upon to do this. Implicit in many of the definitions is that evaluation could help choose between projects or approaches; this is made explicit by Ovretveit who defines evaluation as:

Making a comparative assessment of the value of the evaluated or intervention, using systematically collected and analysed data, in order to decide how to act....Attributing value to an intervention by gathering reliable and valid information about it in a systematic way, and by making comparisons for the purposes of making more informed decisions or understanding causal mechanisms or general principles (Ovretveit 2002: 9).

It is therefore important in considering definitions to be aware of the different purposes to which evaluation can be put. Ovretveit attempts to distinguish different activities for different purposes in Table Six:

**Table Six: Ovretveit’s Purposes and activities of evaluation.**

Purpose of evaluation	Activity
Basic or pure research.	Discovering valid and generalisable knowledge.
Audit.	An investigation into whether an activity meets explicit standards.
Monitoring.	Continuous supervision of an activity for the purpose of checking whether plans and procedures are being followed.
Review.	A single or regular assessment of an activity which may or may not compare it an explicit plan.
Evaluation.	A comparative judgement of the value of an intervention in relation to criteria, for the purposes of making better judgements as to how to act.
Action research.	A systematic investigation which aims to contribute to knowledge as well as solve a practical problem (some action research is a type of evaluation).

Source: Ovretveit (2002: 14).



In considering purposes for evaluation the issue of learning appears in some definitions. Van Der Eyken regards evaluation as an opportunity for thought (and learning?): "...in the end, evaluation is a way of seeing; of reflecting upon field experience which is different from, though not in conflict with, those who are principally involved" Van Der Eyken (1999: 6).

Torres takes the idea of reflection further and introduces the concept of "justice" suggesting that evaluation can lead to good being done: "The objective of all evaluative work is to promote insight, and the ownership of that insight in such a way that it precipitates just and appropriate action" (Torres 1991: 189-198). Finally in this review of evaluation definitions is the principle that evaluation should be a process rather than a one-off activity and that it should start and continue during the life of programmes. This is described in an evaluator's guide as:

A process of assessment which identifies and analyses the nature and impact of processes and programmes .....evaluation is deeper and more analytical than monitoring, focuses on results and impacts as well as describing activities, and is long term – ideally starting as the project or programme begins and continuing through the project's life (and after) (Inter-Act 2001: 1).

Inter-Act also value highly the stakeholder based approach both to how projects are developed and run and as to how they are evaluated. They also suggest indicators for judging the success of participatory approaches.

### **3.3 Discussion on definitions of evaluation.**

The above review serves to illustrate that "evaluation" is not a precise term and the activity of evaluation does not have an easily defined or widely accepted definition. Chapter Five of this thesis explores in depth the reasons why evaluation has emerged as such a contested concept. However from this exploration of definitions some common themes emerge which have usefully

informed the research. One of these themes is that evaluation includes considerations of “value”. In particular the definitions by McCollam and White (CES 2002: 3) and Scriven (1991: 138-143), above, emphasise that it is a higher activity than simply a process of measurement or checking.

Value can be considered in two ways: First, there is the consideration suggested by Scriven (1991: 138-143) that it is the measure of the worth of something. Therefore the question might be asked – is good being done? This is quite separate from the questions that have more usually been asked which often relate to: ‘have the inputs been produced?’ Or ‘have the outputs been achieved?’ There is the danger that a process or activity can be judged a success even though it may not actually be achieving any good, or may be doing harm. Accepting that value is a legitimate element of evaluation leads inevitably to the question of whose values? This makes the typology of evaluations in Chapter Five essential because it opens the debates as to which types of evaluation have which types of values (or whose values) in them. For the purposes of this research the contention that evaluation includes issues of values is accepted and informs some of the judgements made during the research.

Second, there is the study of which internal components add value to a process. Bowling (2002: 9) contends that an essential element is to understand which components of a process cause the desired changes. The recent emphasis on theory of change evaluation uses the principle that there is a chain of causation and a necessity to identify the elements of a programme that make the difference.

Another theme emerging from the review of definitions is the choice between post-hoc, ex-ante and in-programme approaches and the recognition by some that a combination of these may be needed. There is some agreement among commentators that there is a distinction between “appraisal”, which is looking at the proposals in advance with a view to determining whether the project is likely to succeed as proposed and therefore should be funded, and “in-programme” and “post-hoc” evaluation”.



However some authors term appraisal as “ex-ante evaluation.” The main proponents of this school of thought are those that come from the systems view of planning (for example; Lichfield (1996: 37) and Chadwick (1978: 260) that is, they believe that the projects, programmes and indeed the world operate as a machine whose behaviour can be predicted and therefore controlled by varying inputs and processes. A type of ex-ante appraisal that is often undertaken is cost benefit analysis.

HM Treasury (2003: 5) make the distinction clearly that evaluation is undertaken in the knowledge of what actually occurred rather than what is forecast to happen:

Evaluation is similar in technique to appraisal, although it obviously uses historic (actual or estimated) rather than forecast data, and takes place after the event. Its main purpose is to ensure that lessons are widely learned, communicated and applied when assessing new proposals HM Treasury (2003: 5).

Acceptance of this distinction is needed if the view that evaluation is an opportunity for reflection and learning (for example; Van Der Eyken 1999) is to be accepted. In contemporary urban regeneration practice there appears to be a clarity about the distinction between “appraisal” and “evaluation” and it is clear from HM Treasury’s guidance (HM Treasury (2003: 5) that appraisal is normally ex-ante or pre-approval and evaluation is normally after work has started or post-approval. These definitions are accepted in this research.

Rossi (1999) and Ovretveit (2002) introduce another element of evaluation which is related to improvement in practice and comparing projects with a view to learning. This is often referred to now as “best practice” but frequently is simply comparing practice and disseminating information. There are usually two motivations for this: the first is to avoid hundreds of individuals and partnerships ‘reinventing the wheel’ and the second is the eternal search for what works and best practice. Doubt has been cast upon the validity of some best practice reporting (Lawless et al 2000: 2) but this

research has accepted that the dissemination of results and the learning of lessons (good and bad) is an important role for evaluation.

Finally there is an increasing body of theory (discussed in Chapter Five) that takes the view that evaluation is also about promoting justice, righting wrongs, increasing democracy and empowerment of the disempowered and Torres (1991: 189-198) underlines this by proposing two key roles “promoting insight” and “precipitating just and appropriate action”. This research has not accepted that the promotion of these concepts is a prerequisite for evaluation as the body of literature does not sufficiently make this case, for example; it was not specified as a requirement of the evaluations studied in this research.

This review of definitions will finish on this point as it so clearly illustrates how value laden evaluation can become and what great and varied expectations that there are for it. This review has been provided simply to illustrate the widely varying views that this research has had to take into account, no single definition has been, or could be, adopted instead the definitions used by those at the time are presented as part of the body of research evidence.

### **3.4 Definitions of regeneration.**

A further building block for this research has been to understand the wide range of uses of the word “regeneration” and to understand how the various definitions inform the thinking on the subject. Compared to evaluation, regeneration is less frequently defined. Indeed in reviewing all the programme evaluations for this research and in the wide range of literature examined there are only a few stated definitions. Nevertheless, the word has been appropriated by numerous public, private and community bodies to describe a vast range of activities crossing the whole range of policy from health through crime to land reclamation and physical rebuilding.



The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister state that:

The Government's regeneration policy and programmes are part of the drive to tackle the combination of local needs and priorities associated with poverty and deprivation. They include long term and youth unemployment, low skills levels, uncompetitive industry, poor health and education, bad housing, a run down physical environment, benefit dependency, high proportion of lone parents. Loss of community values and social cohesion, ethnic minority disadvantage and high levels of crime and drug misuse (ODPM 2004b: 2.1).

However, it is important to report here in full what the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister goes on to state:

The terms like 'regeneration', 'renewal' and 'regional development' typically do not have simple definitions. The distinguishing characteristic of these interventions is that they have a strong spatial focus and often, as a result, distributional impacts. They tend to aim at, or contribute to, the overall goals for sustainable development of target areas and groups, and have the specific objective of improving outcomes in social, economic and environmental terms (ODPM 2004a: 6).

This is fairly close to a "catch all" definition and is probably based on an assumption of an understanding of departmental boundaries. Nevertheless, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is clear that an important distinguishing feature is the spatial nature of interventions.

The British Urban Regeneration Association in their handbook on regeneration attempt to answer the question "What is urban regeneration?" (Roberts and Sykes 2000: 17). They define urban regeneration as "comprehensive integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, social and environmental condition of an area that is subject to

change". They derive this from their understanding of the themes of urban policy over recent decades and the need, as identified by Lichfield (1992: 19) for "a better understanding of the processes of decline" and agreement on what one is trying to achieve and how". These holistic definitions also address the weaknesses identified by Hausner (1993: 526) of "short term, fragmented, ad hoc and project based" interventions. The British Urban Regeneration Association also draw upon Couch (1990: 2) to draw a distinction between urban regeneration and urban renewal which Couch regards as "a process of essentially physical change".

In their invitation to contribute to the London Assembly's Regeneration investigation, the Greater London Authority Scrutiny Team defined the term "regeneration initiative" as follows:

The term 'regeneration initiative' in the context of this investigation means a project, programme or scheme which is based on the design, management or delivery of one or more of the activities listed below:

- Physical and environmental: Housing; Transport; Environment; Improving/developing business premises.
- People: crime reduction; community safety; health improvement; capacity building/partnership development; developing community facilities, employment support, vocational guidance; skills training, lifelong learning; childcare others - please specify.
- Business: business support, social enterprise, Town Centre improvements (GLA 2001: 4-5).

The Greater London Authority regards regeneration as drawing in a great range of public policy without going as far as to suggest that it needs, by definition, to be holistic or integrated whereas Imrie and Thomas (1999: 4-9) put forward a much narrower view: "In particular the term urban regeneration was coined in the early 1980s to signal an emergent era of urban policy based on property-led answers to urban problems" While not defining



it as “regeneration” the Department of the Environment (1994a) set out their objectives of urban policy as follows in Table Seven:

<i>Table Seven: DOE definitions of urban policy.</i>
<b>High level</b>
• Creation of employment opportunities.
• Creation of cities which are more attractive places to live.
<b>Lower level</b>
• Enterprise development.
• Sites for Economic Development.
• Skills development.
• Motivation to work.
• Inter-agency co-ordination.
• Access to employment and services.
• Housing development.
• Built environment.
• Social fabric.
• Safety and security.

Source: DOE (1994a 6).

The current range of policy, that is frequently referred to as regeneration, includes a much wider range of considerations. First, it includes rural as well as urban and there has been a move away from concentration just on inner cities to include almost anywhere that seems to need attention. Thus market towns, seaside towns, isolated villages,crofting communities, peripheral estates, ex military bases have recently been subject to regeneration programmes (Planning Exchange 2001). Different organisations assume different definitions often without stating what they are. The Planning Exchange (2001), for example, provides a comprehensive listing of urban regeneration contacts and programmes without defining what it means by “regeneration”. It also lists “regeneration” as a separate subject from such topics as “partnership initiatives” and “enterprise zones”.

There is also a move away from the notion that regeneration is targeted at poor areas. The Single Regeneration Budget, in particular, funded projects in some of the wealthier areas for example; The Tate Millbank and Royal Army Medical College redevelopment in Pimlico and Coventry Street Business Improvement District (both in the City of Westminster). Regeneration has

also become, not just place orientated but also theme, people and structures orientated, for example recent Single Regeneration Budget programmes have included Trafalgar Square 2000 (which concentrated on training young people from a wider range of different areas) and Healthy Living Centres. Many community development projects have been funded by European Objective Two funding (Planning Exchange 2001). More recently much emphasis has been placed on sustainable structures for example; the support of Development Trusts, Groundwork Trusts and Social Enterprise by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Regional Development Agencies (ODPM 2004b).

There is an inherent contradiction emerging in the search for a definition of regeneration. If the British Urban Regeneration Association (Roberts and Sykes 2000: 17) definition is accepted, regeneration is both holistic and sustainable (this seems to accord with most current guidance and thinking). It would therefore not be possible to regard many of the elements of current urban policy to date as regeneration as these are almost all short term, project based, single or narrow theme locality based interventions.

Indeed a search for published evaluation materials has not brought to light evaluations of holistic approaches to regeneration currently in print or underway. The nearest to this is probably the DOE's cross-cutting evaluation of Urban Policy (DOE 1994a) but this was an evaluation of a collection of time limited area-based initiatives many of which had little in common with each other. If the evaluation was holistic the policy certainly was not. The New Deal for Communities programme is, at a very local level, intended to be more holistic but it does not have control over mainstream services or events in the surrounding areas and the host city as a whole.

Explicit regeneration through 'bending the mainstream' has been developed by the New Labour Government (HMG 2003) since 1997. The aim has been to try and embed the change and benefits brought about by short term and area-based initiatives. However, there is evidence that this is failing to work



effectively, for example the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Committee of the House of Commons found that:

Mainstreaming cannot be a viable solution to addressing the need of the most disadvantaged areas while there are so many different central government targets for local authorities to meet and priorities for their funds.....However the definition of mainstreaming is still not clear. We recommend that Government reassess the concept, definition, scope and potential scope and impact of mainstreaming, otherwise it will remain a well-intentioned but meaningless mantra (House of Commons 2003: 36).

The British Urban Regeneration Association definition must, at best, be described as aspirational at this stage. For the purposes of this research ‘mainstreaming’ has not been included in the definition of regeneration programmes as the practical and conceptual difficulties would be too great and the subject has not been sufficiently evaluated over time to enable conclusions to be drawn.

This study has faced the same issue of determining what is, and is not, regeneration for the purposes of testing the hypothesis. As this study relies on published evaluations as a principal source of raw material it has been necessary to limit the choice of programmes to those that have published evaluations over the study period. The early programmes that had published evaluations tend to be the Urban Policy instruments which were evaluated as part of the Inner City Research Programme (DOE 1994a) are shown in this table:

**Table Eight - Urban Programme elements.**

<i>Programmes selected for research because they are area-based initiatives and have an available evaluation report.</i>	<i>Not selected because they are not area-based initiatives:</i>
City Grant	(Inner City) Open Learning Centre
City Action Teams	City Technology Colleges
Derelict Land Grant	Employment Training
Enterprise Zones	English Estates' Managed Workshop Programme
Garden Festivals	Enterprise Allowance scheme
Housing Action Trusts	Enterprise Initiative
Urban Development Corporations	Estate Action
Urban Programme	Ethnic Minority Business Initiative
	Housing Corporation
	Jobclubs
	Land Register
	Loan Guarantee Scheme
	Race Relations Employment Advisory Service
	Regional Selective Assistance
	Safer Cities
	Section 11 Grants
	Small Firms Service
	Task Forces
	Transport Supplementary Grant

Source: (DOE 1994a: 6).

In order to capture changes over time more recent regeneration programme evaluations have also been used in the research. The justification for choosing these is that they were published with clear prospectuses which gave them clearly stated regeneration purposes. Indeed the first of these was the City Challenge which was the first attempt at bringing together partnership-led, challenge based regeneration on an area basis. The subsequent programmes chosen were Single Regeneration Budget, Housing Action Trust, New Commitment to Regeneration, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and New Deal for Communities all of which explicitly state that they are “regeneration” programmes (without, of course, defining what is meant by regeneration).



In view of the above it is important to note the wording of the hypothesis which states: “regeneration programmes”. Since Robson *et al*’s (DOE 1994a) overview of the effects of urban policy no attempt has been (or could be?) made to evaluate regeneration efforts as a whole. In 2003 a House of Commons Select Committee did suggest that an attempt be made to evaluate the “outcomes taken as a whole over 30 and more years of pro-active urban policy” (ODPM 2003a: 33). This has so far not been put into effect by the Government though partial multi-programme studies have been undertaken for example the Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NRU 2003a).

Having discussed these difficulties of definition this study nevertheless has been able to be clear in its own terms as to the field of investigation. This has been borne out in the reading and interview stages.

### **3.5 Defining “learning taking place between regeneration programmes”.**

The hypothesis is seeking to identify not just if learning took place but, specifically, if it took place between programmes. The hypothesis was based on the researcher’s interest, outlined in Chapter One, in whether the experiences of those involved in one programme were passed on to those involved in subsequent programmes. This is a different and sharper focus than the more usual question as to whether experience and results have been disseminated.

This transfer of learning can also be described as knowledge transfer or as Bailey suggests it should more accurately be called “knowledge exchange” as people are learning from each other in this context. He describes it as “the process whereby knowledge is disseminated in a form which is most applicable to a given situation” Bailey (2005: 6). This suggests that it is not just a simple transactional process but one that to be successful must take place in the appropriate context for the appropriate purposes. This is a theme that this thesis returns to later (in Chapter Eight).

The transfer of learning is also felt to be important by HM Government not just from one programme to the next but also from area-based initiatives to the mainstream as suggested in the Government's evidence to a Select Committee in which a Treasury spokesperson stated that the department has "keen interest in the evaluation of all kinds of programmes" (ODPM 2003a: 11). The government minister, Barbara Roche, stated that: "you need to have continuous evaluation of all schemes" and a Government Office of the North East officer stated that: "lessons have been learnt from previous regeneration initiatives" (ODPM 2003a: 11).

This question is one also asked by contemporary writers such as Weinstein (2005: 18-21) who describes how the state of Israel has learnt lessons from United Kingdom programmes but not from the "numerous universities, research institutions and consultants (who) are involved in evaluations" in the United Kingdom. Having observed the situation in the United Kingdom closely, he is still driven to state that "to be frank I have no idea as to what extent their publications and findings are implemented by decision makers" Weinstein (2005: 18-21).

A theoretical basis for establishing whether learning takes place was necessary for this study. Literature on the philosophy and practice of learning was reviewed and it is clear that a single definition of "transfer of learning" is not appropriate and that learning is a lifelong activity:

Learning is no longer confined to the time taken up as workers, parents and citizens, but is a lifelong activity, as we constantly adjust to social, economic, and technological changes. Learning is also no longer just about what we know - the facts and concepts we think of as being in our heads. Increasing attention is being given to how we act, what values and beliefs we espouse, even how we look and feel. In other words, it is increasingly recognised that learning shapes the way we are, and this in turn influences what and how we learn (Paechter *et al* 2001: 1).



There are numerous theories on how we learn and Doherty and Horne (2002: 15) describe how philosophers have been thinking about the nature of learning for 2000 years. They summarise the theories as falling into four principal groups under the headings of:

Cognitive (thinking), Behavioural (doing), Humanist (combines the cognitive and behavioural approaches but adds a feeling dimension and a social dimension to learning) and Experiential learning through doing thereby combining the behavioural and cognitive approaches) Doherty and Horne (2002: 15).

Behaviourism understands that “individuals react reflexively to their environment, cognitive processes are de-emphasized, and responses can be conditioned by rewarding” (Briner 1999). Given the complexity and multiple stakeholders in urban regeneration a simplified theory such as this may not be relevant. However, some parallels have been noted in this research with the admitted practice of making sure that what is measured is what is done which could be described as a stimulus-response cycle brought on by the need to meet targets and the prospect of being evaluated on them. Skinner (1938) has promoted the theory suggesting that people responded to events in their environment by some change in their action and could become conditioned to respond in a particular way. Many of this study’s interviewees (reported in Chapter Seven) have highlighted instances of where practitioners became locked into situations where they were constantly reacting to criticisms or to monitoring requirements. It is conceivable that they were learning to react to these stimuli, many of which seemed to be negative and unconstructive. This illustrates that learning both from negative experiences and from target driven evaluation could be distorting learning and embedding practice that was not ideal.

Briner (1999) suggests that humanism emphasises the development of creative and critical thinking skills, the emphasis being on unfolding the potential of individuals “self actualisation”. This suggests that more participatory forms of evaluation may be better at releasing individuals’ ability to learn. This research has found evidence that practitioners have been organising self learning to help them in their tasks.

Briner (1999) also describes how Rogers emphasises the importance of experiential learning which is characterised by personal involvement, being self-initiated and evaluated by the learner and having pervasive effects of the learner. This research has discovered how meaningful and tough regeneration programmes can be for the participants and it is inconceivable that individuals are not learning from these experiences. The critical question is – to what extent is it good and useful learning? One respondent stated that the lesson learnt from a regeneration programme was “never to do to it again”.

Jarvis (1994: 32-43) cautions that research shows that for the majority of potential learners experience does not readily result in reflective learning, indeed many students dug “the same hole deeper.” Briner finds that less than 15% of people can learn reflectively on their own and that some support arrangements (such as coaching) need to be in place – in addition they are quite sceptical of the effectiveness of much group work”. He adds that “just because someone can learn reflectively it doesn’t mean to say that they will”.

Another key theory highlighted by Briner (1999) is Maslow’s theory of “hierarchy of motivation” which suggests that before individuals can maximise their potential they must first meet their basic needs. This theory has often been applied to workplaces but in regeneration it may be more significant for the unpaid community leaders who now have to play such significant leadership roles.

The above summary of learning theories simply serves to make the reader aware of the complexity of the subject and the need not to jump to simplistic cause and effect conclusions. Indeed Winch (2001: 183) concludes “nothing



like a theory about how learning takes place has appeared for there is nothing in the studies to suggest that we are anywhere near, or could be anywhere near, such a theory”.

Winch does, however, suggest that in place of any “grand theory” there are five themes that should inform a study of learning:

- There is the social nature of learning that is, that people learn from their surroundings their upbringing and development.
- There is the “affective” nature of learning, which is closely bound up with the social nature of rule following and the importance of reactive behaviour.
- There is also the importance of motivation in learning something that is both personal and but is also in constant inter-action with society.
- There is the love of what is to be learned and the examples of where “the requirements of love make us do things of which others would not have dreamed us capable”.
- There is the need to respect what is to be learnt.

Winch also suggests that a pre-condition for understanding learning is to accept the importance of human diversity and individualism and how different people will learn different things even in the same circumstances. This emphasises the importance in this current research of the case studies which gave direct access to fifteen of the key individuals involved.

Scott (in Paechter *et al* 2001: 31-41) explains how much learning is informal and “situated” in the context that a subject is living in and that learning can come from a mixture of memories, including of experiences, by role models or colleagues, advice from various sources and finally that the subject is involved in discourses that “act to close off other possibilities”. Scott’s

example is that of how someone learns to be a parent but it is useful as an illustration of how learning might take place in a field such as urban regeneration where there are no established entry qualifications or skill sets.

In the field of urban regeneration programmes, the themes above and an understanding of the potential situatedness of learning are highly relevant. This is because of the variety of stakeholders and the range of backgrounds and experiences that they have. In urban regeneration the stakeholders range from people who live in and raise families in the area (and whose home may be threatened by a proposal) through to Government officials who set (or follow) central rules and may have a different understanding of what conditions are like in an area. The range also includes officers who may be motivated by moving from programme to programme to secure promotion and those who did not seek any involvement in urban regeneration and have been seconded for the time being to an area that they may not really understand.

Doherty and Horne (2002: 409-451) warn that: “the ability to transfer learning cannot be assumed. The researchers discovered that transfer of learning did not take place unless learners were specifically trained on how to transfer learning”. This suggests very significant implications for evaluation. They considered that a range of ingredients need to be present to facilitate learning including “will, skill, resilience and risk taking” – therefore the mere production of an evaluation report may not be sufficient to ensure that learning takes place.

Finger and Brand (1999: 136) when studying public services in Switzerland also found that individuals need to “unlearn unwanted behaviour”. Argyris and Schon (1996: 9-16) argue for capacity building so that learners may learn more fully and suggest a second learning loop to boost the capacity of individuals to learn (metacognition). This supports the increasing amount of capacity building that is being undertaken for regeneration participants. It also suggests that care needs to be taken that the recipients of learning have the capacity to learn at the time that the learning is offered. As examples; if



the people involved are too busy attending meetings, preparing funding bids or engaging in process tasks such as filling in returns they may simply not have the ability to take on board learning.

It can be seen that there is a very wide range of considerations that influence whether learning will pass on from one programme to the next and this justifies the evidence standard used in this thesis; that the mere production of information and its publication and dissemination is not, in itself, evidence of learning. In order to corroborate evidence a process of triangulation has been attempted bringing to bear evidence from published evaluations with corresponding theory tested with the stakeholder interviews in the four case studies. Patton (1997) has suggested elements of evaluations that might make learning more likely and in this research the stakeholder questionnaire has been designed to take into account many of these complexities.

**Table Nine: Checklist for the improving the likelihood that an evaluation will be seen and heard by policy makers**

<b>What decisions are findings expected to influence?</b>
When will the decisions be made? By whom?
When must the evaluation findings be present to be timely and influential?
What is at stake in the decisions? For whom?
What controversies or issues surround the decisions?
What is the history and context of the decision-making process?
What other factors will affect the decision-making?
What might happen to make the decision irrelevant or keep it from being made? In other words, how volatile is the decision-making environment?
How much influence do you expect the evaluation to have – realistically?
To what extent has the outcome of the decision already been determined?
What data and findings are needed to support decision-making?
What needs to be done to achieve that level of influence?
How will we know afterwards if the evaluation was used as intended? In effect, how can use be measured?

Source: Patton (1997: 378–379).

Standards of evidence had to be set, in conducting this research, so that judgements could be made on the written and verbal data. As little written evidence of transfer of learning has been discovered by this research a “real world research” approach has been adopted as discussed by Robson (2002: 35). This includes a search for the “mechanisms and contexts” by which

learning might transfer. Robson then suggests that a process of “following up these leads” is needed. that is, exploring with those who are knowledgeable which mechanisms to concentrate on.

McInroy (2004: 14) goes further and suggests the importance of the role of local practitioners in learning and arriving at applicable solutions from studying best practice: “Emphasis on regeneration is placed on monitoring and evaluation, but this type of local knowledge goes much deeper than this, as it highlights a deep-rooted and intuitive understanding of the issues and concerns”.

There is clearly no single definition of transfer of learning. A process of exploration must be followed recognising that there may be many possible mechanisms and contexts and that it is both the operation of the mechanism and its context that is important to achieve knowledge transfer. Therefore the following two initial standards were adopted for this research:

- 1) That learning takes place in many ways and it does not have to be formal to register as learning (but examples would be sought to demonstrate learning).
- 2) That the mere production of information and its publication and dissemination is not, in itself, evidence of learning, this would need to be corroborated by some evidence. This could be either documentary evidence or evidence from those who were involved in planning and/or running subsequent programmes.

The Charities Evaluation Services (Russell 1998: 3) have also examined the question how organisations can tell if they know that their work has been influential in policy development and have highlighted the difficulties of this which include the complex and multi-dimensional influences on policy making which were difficult to unpick and that policy-making tends to work in indirect ways and over long periods.



Russell suggests that “policies sometimes seem to get made before evaluation evidence is available, or in spite of the evidence are often influenced by a curious assortment of factors” (Russell 1998: 3).

### **3.6 Conclusions on definitions**

This chapter has illustrated that there is a very wide range of definitions of evaluation and that no single definition can be applied. Instead this research utilises the understanding that there are many valid types of and purposes for evaluation which will be different in different circumstances. In Chapters Four and Five this is further explored in the context of how evaluation as a practice has evolved against a background of constantly evolving regeneration programmes and modes of governance.

In the same way the study of the definitions of regeneration has revealed a very wide ranging set of definitions but it has been possible to arrive at certain defining features for the purpose of conducting effective research. These include: an area basis; time limitation (therefore not mainstream) and identification as such in key texts such as Robson *et al* (DOE 1994a).

Finally a way of identifying the transfer of learning needs to be established and the review of literature in this chapter has shown the complexity of learning theories. Nevertheless standards and methods (such as Patton’s checklist) have been identified so that in the documentary analysis in Chapter Six and the case studies in Chapter Seven the right questions can be asked and appropriate conclusions drawn.

This Chapter therefore has shown that despite the many complexities in defining the key terms in this research, practical methods can be developed for collecting and assessing the data require to address the research question.

## **Chapter Four: The context: constantly evolving regeneration programmes and changes in UK governance.**

### **4.1 Introduction.**

This chapter examines the context in which urban regeneration has evolved, in particular, the changes in the way that the relationships between central and local government (and other local partners) operate. It describes how the nature of urban regeneration has radically changed from programmes delivered by government (Central and Local), to programmes that are ostensibly community, or at least locality, led (with many stages in between). These appear to be deep rooted changes and not simply different organisational arrangements so they have affected the context for transfer of learning.

Urban regeneration has developed through some key phases starting with post-war rebuilding when there was a fairly clear role for local government in leading on redevelopment in accordance with national targets and resources. Central government determined what had to be done, allocated the resources and local government, by and large, delivered through its traditional structures and accountabilities. There were some exceptions to this such as the New Towns Commission.

This chapter then relates how by the late 1960s there was an element of continuing frustration, despite all the post-war re-building efforts (or because of them?) with the conditions in some areas. Central government intervened more closely by introducing partnerships with local government to secure area-based priority actions. Local government itself was to come under some pressure from the belief that the corporate culture of the private sector may have lessons for local government to benefit from in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.



The biggest changes were to occur with the election of the Thatcher Governments when there was a move to constrain local government, cut public spending, privatise some services through Compulsory Competitive Tendering, and engage the private sector and private sector techniques in urban regeneration.

Under successive Conservative Governments local government started to lose its primacy in terms of urban regeneration and soon a plethora of partnerships and quangos were sharing this lead. Early criticism of some of the top-down partnerships and quangos led to the involvement of more broad based partnerships and the involvement of the community in urban regeneration partnerships but still left local government's role unclear and seemingly under threat. The involvement of many and varied partners, often new to urban regeneration, introduced new complexities and challenges to learning.

The election of a New Labour Government in 1997 led to a move towards more evidence based urban regeneration and regimes of inspection and audit that put further pressure on local government to perform and improve. New Labour did wish to increase resourcing of some public services. However, due to a lack of trust in local government they sought to deliver this through an increasing array of partnership arrangements.

New Labour moved away from the top-down approach of government regulation towards an approach of setting the standards and targets and objectives and getting the local coalitions to determine how best to meet these targets. After a bewildering period of partnership and initiative multiplication New Labour has sought to rationalise affairs by establishing single locality partnerships "Local Strategic Partnerships" and unified Community Plans. This chapter also relates how commentators have felt this to be part of a new way of governing involving ways of encouraging local agencies and communities to self govern according to rules and incentives from the centre.

In analysing these changes over time this chapter has been able to detect an increasing role for learning as new regimes, particularly from City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget onwards, have required locally commissioned evaluation and transfer of learning. Many doubts have been expressed by critics on the veracity of some of this learning but this chapter demonstrates how evaluation, learning and the transfer of learning has become more vital as more players become involved in an increasingly confused landscape and old accountability structures are reduced in importance, particularly in local government, and new ones emerge.

#### **4.2 Eras in local governing and themes and trends in urban regeneration**

Urban regeneration policy and instruments, as defined in this study have largely been the product of central government and in each case have been delivered to a greater or lesser extent with local government. Therefore the changing relationships between the two layers of government could be seen to fundamentally affect the development of urban regeneration.

Stoker (2004: 11) detected three eras of local governing since the Second World War. The first was “elected local government in a post-war setting” this was characterised by a dominant ideology of “Professionalism and Party Partisanship”, the determination and management of inputs by an “overhead democracy” and little in the way of public input. The second wave he described as “New Public Management” and he suggests this initially started in the 1960s and ‘70s with the cross-over of ideas from the corporate sector but only became predominant as a way of imposing centralising and cost-cutting “efficiency driven” and managerialist local government as recognised by Dunleavy (1980: 45).

Finally Stoker identifies a trend since the election of the New Labour Governments from 1997 onwards towards “Networked Community Governance” (Stoker 2004: 11). This was identified by Sullivan (2001: 1-24) as being based on the idea of localism and the need to search for local solutions to local problems and is not about defining services but more about



meeting community needs and doing so through multiple levels and multiple players.

While considering how governance has evolved and the changing context and increasing importance of evaluation it is also important to reflect on how evaluation itself has been evolving. Ho has proposed that evaluation has evolved through three “ages.” She suggests that the first age was the Age of Innocence (1968-77) when evaluation was intended to be formative but, in fact, it was not utilised to design programmes and was sidelined and then not continued. She says that “such an in-depth approach is no longer found as part of evaluation studies” and reports that; for example, no final report was produced of the Community Development Programme even though she states that lessons were learned about the importance of area-based action (HO 2003: 20).

However Ho may be mistaken in regarding this as an age of innocence as Atkinson and Moon (1994: 50) suggest “it is perhaps one of the greatest ironies that the Home Office found itself funding a bunch of Marxists”. If these studies were politicised then that may help to explain why since then evaluation has always been commissioned on the basis of a tight brief (until recently usually from central government and has been focussing on the outputs and outcomes determined by programme funders).

The move to this type of commissioning of evaluation led to the second age which Ho describes as the Age of Dissent (1980s) where consultants were reporting more on the inputs and outputs and margins of operations or “fine tuning” than on the substance of the programme or the conditions in the area. Ho also suggests that whereas the Community Development Programme reports had been written in such a way that a wider audience could use them and to appeal to pressure groups (Ho 2003: 24). In contrast many of the reports produced in the Age of Dissent were distinctly conditional, inconclusive, and according to the findings of this research, attractive to, and used by, a very limited and, usually official, audience.

Ho (2003: 31) suggests that this was the era based on government ideology including a distrust of local authorities, a drive for competition leading to the need to measure inputs and outputs and the need to dictate from the centre what was to be done and by whom. She states that “output driven evaluation was only a manifestation of government ideology”. She also suggests that the government confused performance monitoring with evaluation of policy impacts. This focus on performance measures attracted much criticism from contemporary writers (for example Brownill 1990 and Docklands Consultative Committee 1990).

Some of the criticism was about the “top-down” approach to urban regeneration but much of it focussed on the operational and conceptual weaknesses of the approaches taken, for example Lever and Moore’s (1986: 152-5) study of the economic regeneration of Clydeside which showed five key conceptual weaknesses in using performance management figures to determine true policy impacts (they called these: dead-weight, distribution, displacement, duration and duplication). In the same way Robson *et al* (1994: 39-40) produced their “six Cs” contextual, counterfactual, contiguity, choice, confound and combinatorial. These, and the many other difficulties that there are in basing policy evaluation on outputs are discussed in depth in Chapter Five below.

It can be seen therefore that there was a considerable body of scepticism during this “age of dissent” as to the application and usefulness of evaluation. However, this was to change as the approach to evaluation changed as the Conservative Government moved from a physical and economically dominated approach to a more community and social orientation.



The third age (1990s) is described by Ho as the “Age of Acquiescence” and she pointed out the following key features: the return to local government in leading regeneration; a renewed role for the community; the recognition of the importance of social and community aspects in regeneration and the importance of area-based regeneration. However this age also introduced the “challenge” element which put evaluation again under a different spotlight as programme performance had to be both predicted in advance in considerable detail (outputs by quarter predicted up to seven years ahead). Performance would then be measured in a strict and formulaic regime (such as with the Single Regeneration Budget) to determine the future of the programme and the freedoms that it would have to make local decisions.

Yet again evaluation’s role had changed – it was now linked directly to central monitoring of local performance. Thus there was an incentive for evaluation reports to show that programmes were performing well – at the national level because central government had invested its reputation in these programmes and locally because continued funding depended on it. These pressures may have meant that there was less possibility for learning to take place from evaluation. Even if lessons were available the timing of reports (as shown in Chapter Six) made their transfer unlikely if not impossible.

Nevertheless the City Challenge final evaluation included “transferable lessons” and an event was conducted with Chief Executives to discuss these. However, Ho (2003: 54) found that: “there was no formal discussion on the lessons learnt from the interim evaluation; or the follow up of threads picked up during the interim study”. Indeed the final evaluation itself was not produced until the programme had ceased and the successor programme, the Single Regeneration Budget was well underway. So lessons were not learnt in time. As has been discovered during this study (Chapter Six) there is little evidence of evaluation work of this period informing future policy in a formative sense.

The 'three ages' helpfully allow an illustration of evaluation having followed what Ho calls a rough path of unfulfilled expectations, un-realistic expectations, top-down control and compromise by being linked to continuation of funding and unrealised learning. She also reviews the key critics including Barnekov *et al* (1990: vii), Stewart (1990: 135) and Lawless (1989: 168) all of whom emphasise the importance of evaluation. She summarises the situation as "generally speaking, the overall impression provided by the critics is that evaluation is a wasted effort". This is detailed by Higgins *et al* (1983: 169) who argue that "if any single lesson emerges clearly from the account of successive inner-city policies it is the failure to learn from and apply experience gained at each stage". Lawless reinforces this by proposing that the monitoring and evaluation of urban policy did not lead to modifications of policy nor result in large scale policy review. Burton and Boddy (1995) described evaluation as having had "little impact... in a fundamentally flawed policy approach". The question of the impact of management by objectives and indicators is considered further later in this chapter.

#### **4.3 Post-war reconstruction efforts.**

The Second World War left a legacy, not just of devastated areas of cities and homelessness, but also of under investment in infrastructure, in particular housing and transport. Peace-time expectations were raised by the "homes fit for heroes" commitments of the incoming Labour Government, the rise of the welfare state and the emergence of newly available forms of privatisation, especially the private car. The 1950s and 1960s could be described as an era of rebuilding rather than regeneration as many communities were destroyed by slum clearance and new estates built in their place or new towns and suburbs built. The policy shift from wholesale re-development to regeneration is attributed by Atkinson and Moon (1994) to the sheer cost of these interventions rather than to any pressure from the affected communities. Whatever the driver there was a shift from demolishing and



rebuilding the areas where people live to one of trying to make the communities in those areas “work”.

Stoker (2004: 22-4) suggests that there was a Weberian paradigm whereby three political institutions were paramount – the political leadership; parties and bureaucracy; and local democracy which served to produce elected members from which leaders were chosen and to which bureaucracies reported. As Dalton and Wattenberg (2002: 1) state: “Modern democracy was unthinkable save in terms of political parties”.

#### **4.4 Community as the focus of policy the first time round – the community as the object of regeneration.**

Identifying the lack of “community” as a barrier to regeneration is not a New Labour creation; indeed it reflects similar policy in the late 1960s in the United Kingdom when the Home Office (1968: 3) argued that the regeneration of British cities depended on the “growth of persons in the community” and the “awareness of interdependence”. In July 1969 the Home Office announced that Liverpool, Coventry, and Southwark were to take part in neighbourhood based action research projects – known as Community Development Projects. The emphasis was “on citizen involvement and self help, better integration and co-ordination of government services, and the use of research to provide information for action and for the monitoring of and evaluation of policies” (Imrie and Raco 2003: 10).

#### **4.5 Partnership between central and local government.**

Community Development Programmes were partnerships based on central/local government intervention. The Community Development Programmes eventually rose to twelve in number following which the Urban Programme was introduced on a much larger scale – both programmes targeted at communities with specially high and complex needs.

By the late 1970s, in particular following the White Paper "Policy for the Inner Cities" (DOE 1977), these policies were being phased out and the resources applied to new central-local partnerships (for example; the Inner City Partnerships) (Taylor 1998). After the Conservative Government was elected the Inner City Partnerships were continued but new 'top down', private sector type vehicles such as Urban Development Corporations were introduced. As Colenutt and Cutten state; the policy emphasis was "not on people and communities but on property and physical regeneration" (Colenutt and Cutten 1994: 236-50). This started a move away from community development approaches for almost 20 years. It had been found hard to operationalise and even harder to measure and independently evaluate community development approaches. The move to more physical and fiscal measures would make it easier for evaluation to take place albeit on a more simplistic input/output and effects model.

Successive Conservative Governments regarded local authorities as part of the problem and not the solution. They were seen as inefficient, problematic and in some cases over-political. Continuous pressure was put on local authorities to behave more like businesses (for example; management by objectives and target setting) and to expose them to the rigours of the market place. Compulsory Competitive Tendering was introduced and in some cases (for example; the National Health Service) an internal market. These measures were put in place to instil the ostensible values of Thatcherism; economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In reality the results have been less clear cut and highly contested.



Filkin, who Stoker (2004: 55) describes as the architect of New Labour's Best Value policies comments:

Many councils saw Compulsory Competitive Tendering as being about defending in-house organisations from losing work to external bidders. The private sector organisation was seen in hostile terms and the aim was to make it as unlikely as possible for them to win the work". Thus rather than creating leaner and more efficient local services CCT may have simply encouraged those formerly in power to ensure that the services did not work once it left their hands (Filkin 1999: 5)

#### **4.6 Partnership with private sector.**

At the same time as exposing local government services to private sector ways the government was also putting urban regeneration increasingly into private sector hands. Atkinson and Moon suggest that this was "a period of neo-liberalism underwritten by state intervention" and that there had been a "failure of the social democratic consensus, the new right government saw the growth of the state as a barrier to regeneration" Atkinson and Moon (1994: 165). Inner cities were regarded as a threat because of the breakdown of families, increasing crime and other social problems, the Government saw the answer lying in the free market by removing planning and other controls. A key difference between the private and public sector was the ability to raise private capital and invest in, develop and market property. Physical redevelopment also had the advantage of achieving visual transformations of long derelict sites and enabled the infrastructure for the market economy to be put in place.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s urban policy was dominated by property led regeneration behind this regeneration lay the diagnosis of our cities' problems as a shortfall of physical infrastructure to support the activities of global corporate investors (Imrie and Raco 2003: 3).

This statement illustrates one era in the ever changing evolution of urban policy. This can be categorised as the “Thatcher years” (Thornley 1993) when patience with local authorities had run out and agencies were established to remove supply side constraints to investment in cities. The 1988 policy statement “Action for Cities” (HMG 1988) put forward the private sector as the leader of regeneration efforts.

Initiatives over this period were typified by fiscal regimes (often geographically targeted) such as Enterprise Zones, flagship land and image reclamation schemes (for example; Garden Festivals), and area-based initiatives that increasingly required competition and private sector leadership, for example; City Challenge. Marxist perspectives suggested (Rees and Lambert 1985) that these activities were also a cover for reducing the overall level of expenditure and that there was a dichotomy between the policy of rolling back the state and the fact that all these were state interventions albeit ones that supported the private sector.

The driving theory (at least as stated in public) was that corporate investment and success in cities would lead to ‘trickle down’ of wealth into local communities so that all would benefit (DoE 1985a). However for many commentators this was a period of intensification and of inequality and poverty in the cities (Imrie and Raco 2003: 4). Indeed Schoon regarded this as just another unsuccessful era of interventions: ‘100 years of policy initiatives [that] had almost no impact on the patterns of inequality’ (Schoon 2001: 83). However, urban policy, alone cannot be blamed for this as there were also many wider and structural changes to economy and to social and economic policy.

Imrie and Thomas (1999) referring to Urban Development Corporations also found that there were problems in accounting for the success or otherwise of these new bodies. They suggest that there were three reasons for what they called the “subversive potential of independent evaluation”: The growing influence of privatism and market values within the state locally and centrally (for example; information that would once have been public



becomes subject to commercial confidentiality); increase in urban entrepreneurialism (for example; involving a concern for imagery and an aversion to bad publicity from evaluation reports) and they state: “all of these have generated a significant different, problematical context for the conduct of urban policy evaluation” (Imrie and Thomas: 1999).

The 1980s also saw the emergence of partnerships as a driving force but weaknesses in this approach were found very early on, for example in some areas local authorities (in this case Salford and Manchester) found it impossible to work together “might as well have been two different cities” (sic) (Atkinson and Moon 1994: 78) and Higgins *et al* found that “inter-agency conflict was a negative theme” (Higgins *et al* 1983: 145). Generally speaking writers have been critical of partnership working and found that evidence from partnerships suggests that effective co-ordination has been lacking and that some organisations viewed the arrangements as a threat to autonomous policy making. However Bailey (1995) and others have found that partnership working can have many strengths alongside any difficulties.

The failure of urban policy cannot be attributed entirely to this period. There was also longer term disillusionment with the ability of policy to tackle inequalities. Schoon asserts that “100 years of policy initiatives had almost no impact in the pattern of inequality” Schoon (2001: 83).

Despite the official position that there was to be less government interference and bureaucracy under the Conservatives, Hood *et al* (1998) found that between the years 1976 and 1995 the number of regulatory bodies directed at local government grew from 57 to 67. Hood also estimated that there was a more than doubling of expenditure on audit, inspection and regulation and felt that local government of all institutions attracted the greatest degree of regulatory concern.

Stoker (2004: 45) found that “the view of many commentators on British local government was that the institution suffered grievously and unfairly under successive Conservative Governments”. Loughlin noted that this had

led to an alteration in the basic character of local government as it lost its responsibilities to a multiplicity of agencies and quangos funded directly from the centre. He contested that “the recent reforms have altered the basic character of local government. The tradition of the self-sufficient, corporate authority which was vested with broad discretion to raise revenue and provide services has been directly challenged...” Loughlin (1996: 56). Table Ten illustrates the extent to which central regulation was introduced by the time the Conservatives lost power in 1997:

**Table Ten: Key new regulators of local public bodies that were created by the Conservative Governments between 1979 and 1997.**

<b>Organisation (year created).</b>	<b>Main task.</b>	<b>Accountability</b>
Audit Commission for local auditors and the NHS (1982).	Appoints auditors to local authorities and health bodies, undertakes value for money studies, publishes key performance indicators.	Reports to central government particularly the Department of the Environment.
Magistrates’ Court Inspectorate (1994).	Inspects the administration and management of the Magistrates’ Courts.	Lord Chancellor’s Office.
Office of HM Chief Inspector of Schools (Office for Standards in Education) (1992).	Reports on every state school at least once every four years.	Secretary of State for Education.
Social Services Inspectorate (1985).	To manage national inspection services to carers and user in the social services sector.	Secretary of State for Health.

Source: Hood *et al* (1998: 115; Appendix III).



#### **4.7 New Labour Government.**

Local government was in an acknowledged state of crisis by the time that the New Labour Government was elected in 1997. Stoker (2004: 215) highlights that the incoming government, itself was unsure about the role of local authorities. He describes how Robert Hill, the Prime Minister's first local government adviser felt that local government needed to re-invent itself as a leader in the local area with a drive more to identify and meet needs in local partnerships than to be a deliverer of services. Hill was also clear that a question-mark hung over local government:

Around half the population, on their own admission, know hardly anything about local government and are confused about what little they do know...Given this state of affairs, is local government worth bothering with? 'Yes...but' must be the answer (Hill 1996: 22).

The incoming New Labour Government was committed to regenerate Britain's cities by a combination of social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and community involvement, commitment was from the highest level of government, including the Prime Minister (SEU 1998b). The Social Exclusion Unit was established and quickly created eighteen Policy Action Teams to examine the causes of and potential solutions to urban problems. This was an early sign of a new labour 'big tent' approach towards policy – key actors from government, voluntary and private sectors as well as think tanks were brought together to produce thematic reports. The collected analyses were also integrated into the principal policy consultation document: "A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal" (SEU 1998b), which suggests that the key process problems to be overcome included too much reliance on short term regeneration, governments failing to harness the knowledge and energy of local people, too little attention to the problems of worklessness, crime and poor education and, particularly relevant for this study: a failure to spread what works and encourage innovation. This was a

fairly damning indictment of urban policy but it was also a launch pad for a re-invigoration of urban policy.

Stoker identified three themes of the original New Labour agenda; democratic renewal; “joined-up” partnership working; and performance management (Stoker 2004: 49). Perri 6 and Peck (2003) noted that ‘modernisation’ was the watchword used by New Labour to embrace these agendas. Indeed they searched the [www.open.gov.uk](http://www.open.gov.uk) web-site (the official UK Government portal for published Government information) on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2001 and the site identified 53,999 government documents which were currently available and had the word ‘modernisation’ on their front page (Stoker 2004: 49). Temple (2002: 302-25) suggests that this is a move away from leaders seeking the right statements of principle to a more pragmatic understanding of what works and can be delivered in the circumstances.

One underlying theme of modernisation is ‘entrepreneurial welfarism’, Stoker (2004: 51-4) states that this was driven by the Treasury and uses state support to incentivise individuals to ‘do their bit’ to improve themselves. Another theme has been the attempt to “restore state capacity” Stoker suggests that this is a move towards flexible government and away from the New Right’s anti-government rhetoric. Thus local government has been encouraged to restructure and modernise (for example: use new technology) and additional layers of governance have been introduced such as the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. The search for democratic renewal has included directly elected mayors, cabinet forms of local government, regional assemblies, all postal voting and insisting that local authorities consult and engage effectively. This has included encouragement to use a wide range of innovative techniques such as Citizens Panels and Youth Parliaments. Improvement and inspection regimes have been linked to consultation too. Stoker also suggests that ‘modernisation’ also includes public managers not assuming that the solution to any problem is the injection of more resources.



The Local Government Act (2000) both increased the scope of local government by introducing the general power of well-being and required radical changes in the internal management structures of local authorities premised on a commitment to the doctrine of separation of powers (Stoker 2004: 126-34), and was based on a doctrine that can trace its origins to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (that executive power needs to be checked and challenged if political liberty is to be maintained). An efficiency effect of these changes has been that much smaller numbers of people are involved in decision-making. This serves both to enable a speedier and more certain process but also to create clearer winners and losers among local Councillors, some of whom have great sway, but the majority of whom are now on the sidelines. The problem that was being addressed was “unclear decision making which weakens the link between local people and their democratically elected representatives” (HMG 1999: 19). However Stoker has found that this has grown into a complex system with blurred responsibilities and doubts about the legitimacy of governance (Stoker 2004: 41).

Corera pointed out that a difficulty for New Labour has been that its agenda has “shallow roots” – based on an elite group around the Prime Minister and the Chancellor (Corera 1998: 6-16). This might have contributed to the feeling that there was a need to control local government with new directives, challenges and forms of measurement as there was little tendency in local government to voluntarily adopt these new ways of acting.

There has since followed what Imrie and Raco (2003: 4) describe as a bewildering myriad of policies. Some commentators have noticed that underpinning this was a change in the way that governance itself was to operate with a layering of government to create new levels of community governance.

The Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister (Mulgan 1998: 200) described the intention of this new form of governance as:

To the extent that powers and responsibilities can be passed down to smaller scales politics and government can be freed to concentrate on what they alone can do...of thinking strategically while leaving citizens and communities to govern themselves (Mulgan 1998: 200).

Stoker also felt that another central theme was the tension between the increased demand for public spending and an increasing belief that the public did not want to pay more taxes. He states: “the focus on governance is, in part, about solutions to manage this tension.” (Stoker 2004: 20-1). Best Value is an example of the continuation of the Conservative search for better management of public services but in a less prescriptive and simplistic form ameliorating the influence of the market with more value-based local judgements and consultation. However at the same time Best Value applies to a wider range of local services than Compulsory Competitive Tendering did. So, while lessening controls, Central Government has widened them and replaced top-down government solutions with a duty to arrive at local solutions that meet the top-down Government agenda.

As Hood *et al* suggest the tools of government are being used (for example; communication, bargaining, offering financial incentives etc) rather than government itself. Hood outlines three key dimensions of governance by regulation within layers of government:

- One public organisation aims to shape the activities of another.
- Oversight is at arm's length, in that there is not a direct action or command relationship.
- The regulator has some kind of official mandate to scrutinise the behaviour of the regulatee and to seek to change it (Hood *et al* 1998: 8-13).



The Best Value Inspection Service also was given a role in identifying and disseminating good practice (Davies *et al*: 2001). However there have been widespread concerns about the costs and value of the Best Value exercise itself (Enticott *et al*: 2002).

It can be concluded that at the centre of New Labour's reform agenda is a belief that it can design a system for performance improvements with three clear elements: Defined standards of service delivery; inspection, scrutiny and review; challenge, rewards and incentives. This is highly relevant to the study of evaluation and transfer of learning but it is possible that, on reflection, the Government has realised that to achieve these aims is harder in practice than in policy. Many of the conundrums and burdens of the evaluation process must also surely apply to Best Value but over a much wider range of services.

#### **4.8 Government, Governmentality, and Networked Community Governance.**

Analysis of political statements and actions of that era has led theorists such as Etzioni (1996: 87) and Newman (2001: 35-36) to see these trends in regeneration as part of the rise of communitarian views of society regarding people in regeneration areas as being duty bound to act as what Dagger describes as "a self governing member of a self governing community" (Dagger 2000: 26).

Etzioni describes this as people being expected to be "part of a social order that is well balanced with socially secured autonomy" Etzioni (1996: 87). Writers such as Raco and Imrie (2000: 2187-2204) have developed their analysis to suggest that "the shift to the rights and responsibilities agenda in urban policy is part of broader transformations in the rationalities of government".

They suggest that a Foucauldian framework can be used to understand the new political and policy agenda and demonstrate, by examining the Single Regeneration Budget, the techniques of “Governmentality”, that is; the process of getting active communities to govern themselves. They suggest that the Foucauldian approach relates to mentalities of government or governmentality as a basis for political thought and action. Governmentality is characterised by particular ways of thinking about the kind of problems that should be addressed by various authorities (Foucault : 1991: 87-104). .

This has been described by Rose and Miller (1992: 181) as “problematizing activities and responding with a programmatic regime of “white papers, other official documents, committees of enquiry, etc. all of which seek to transform regimes of (government) practice”. They also find that governmentality is also underpinned by the operation of programmes through strategies, techniques and procedures Miller and Rose (1990: 1-31) refer to the “technologies of government”. These technologies include urban regeneration programmes particularly in the respect that they harness activity from all aspects of a community into following and implementing Government rules in finding solutions to their own areas’ problems.

Richard Caborn (1999), the local regeneration minister, summarised this in layperson’s language in a speech to the New Labour Government’s first national regeneration conference: “success depends on giving communities the responsibility for making things better, the skills and confidence to get involved, and the power to really achieve their aims”.

Perri 6 and Peck (2003) also found that ‘earned autonomy’ was another distinctive feature of New Labour’s managerial style. This has been interpreted by some commentators almost as though local government had lost its right to govern:



Local authorities can once again become local government, but they must expect to earn that right and earn it individually and service by service. They must not be permitted to assume it is theirs by inheritance (Mulgan and Perri 6 1996: 3-7).

This has led to the rise in inspection which Stoker attributes to the “loss of confidence in professional self-regulation and a concern that the accountabilities of local politics were not sufficiently robust to guarantee that public services would improve their performance” Stoker (2004: 94). Stoker finds that regimes of audit and inspection now embrace the full range of local authority services.

In Giddens’ (1995) analysis this process includes individuals being engaged in reflexively monitoring their actions so that they can account for what they do when asked to do so by others. Thus the processes of monitoring and evaluation may have changed their roles from the Government checking that what it is doing is working, to local actors checking themselves that they have been following the regime’s rules. This is also what is happening in community-led programmes such as New Deal for Communities. In addition the Government is still checking up at a national level. Indeed Raco and Imrie (2000: 2187-2204) see the roll out of programmes such as Single Regeneration Budget as being ostensibly advanced liberal policy frameworks enabling individuals and communities to determine their needs and the solutions to them but in fact they are, as Rose describes them: ways in which urban problems are defined, labelled and problematised by government and “made amenable to authoritative action in terms of features of communities and their strengths, cultures and pathologies”. Rose also suggests that programmes such as the Single Regeneration Budget were: “new mechanisms to link the calculations and actions of a heterogeneous array of organisations into political objectives governing them at a distance through the instrumentalisation of regulated autonomy” Rose (1996a: 334).

For the purposes of this study, this trend is important because it represents a new role for evaluation and transfer of learning. Now that communities are leading actors in urban policy (for example; in the New Deal for Communities programmes) and they are expected to learn from others and use evidence based practice, there is an increased need to ensure that both effective evaluation and transfer of learning take place. It also means that the commissioners of learning and gatekeepers of the transfer of learning have also changed. Therefore the topics of evaluation and the indicators of success have changed. Particularly noticeable is the move towards measuring outcomes (which can better measure qualitative changes) from outputs and even inputs which typically are used as quantitative measures. As Foucault (1991) suggests in return for a little extra freedom of action, subjects come under greater monitoring, scrutiny, and surveillance by the state.

Worryingly, Raco and Imrie found: "Research on the implementation of the SRB project since 1994 highlights these trends" (Raco and Imrie 2000: 2187-2204). Foley *et al* in their evaluation of a range of projects in central England found that systems of surveillance and management discipline were replacing relations of trust and professional management". Even though these programmes may have been set up with the idea of empowerment the mentality that has developed is one of the contract culture which, of course, reduces the need for trust. They also found that both Best Value and Best Practice were used as methods of encouraging and enforcing "non-ideological" and "responsible" local actions (Foley *et al* 1998: 63-80).

A significant change identified by Imrie and Raco (2003:26) is in the role of the community, they detect a change of the community's role from being an object of policy to a policy instrument. They see this as a rejection of both Conservative reliance on incentivising the market and old Labour reliance on the state to provide. The new vision is one where active citizens take part in partnerships between government and civil society and based on the plurality of broader social networks and change is achieved "bottom up" by providing opportunities for participative politics, "local empowerment and engagement of residents in their own lives" (Rose 1996: 335).



Thus, once again, the learning needed for successful urban regeneration can no longer be the preserve of a few managers and commissioners in public places but needs to be effective across wide and varied audiences. As well as effects, evaluation is now expected to measure process issues such as the extent of community involvement and the ability of target groups to influence decisions. Hood *et al* (1998: 16) see this spreading of power and control as having another intended effect; that of “making outcomes and operations unpredictable” and they have attempted to define some of the features of this emerging form of Governance which they term; “Networked Community Governance”. They found four main features;

- Regulation happens within the Government by regimes of inspection, targets etc (as opposed to the Weberian paradigm where regulation was primarily by the Government);
- The market is a key co-ordinating mechanism;
- The increasing strength of “interest articulation”, which Hirschman (1970: 30) calls “voice”;
- The recognition that “loyalty” (Hirschman 1970: 30) or Trust (Fukuyama 1999: 16, 49) is an essential and effective lubricant for successful governance (Hood *et al* 1998: 16).

Trust is described by Fukuyama as a key enabling mechanism in this new form of governance: “...if people can be counted on to keep to commitments, honour norms or reciprocity and avoid opportunistic behaviour, then groups will form more readily, and those that do form will be able to achieve common purposes more efficiently” (Fukuyama 1999: 16, 49).

Perhaps a key example of the themes of New Labour's agenda coming together is the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Regime. This brings together the range of inspections, peer reviews, and consultation into a package that can completely redefine a local authority not in terms of how it, or its electors, see it but in terms of numerous quangos and peers whose task it is to promote the modernisation agenda by many different routes. Comprehensive Performance Assessment, like Best Value, is linked to an improvement regime – failing authorities sign up to an improvement regime which includes external support in terms of learning from others, this is co-ordinated by the Improvement and Development Agency. Stoker finds that Comprehensive Performance Assessment has been developed because Best Value was not delivering results to the extent needed. He also finds that this is evidence that even though New Labour prides itself on backing what works it will also move on to try new initiatives to bring about the performance improvements it requires (Stoker 2004: 106).

#### **4.9 Statutory and permanent partnerships and mainstreaming**

For Networked Community Governance to work it requires local politicians who can act and facilitate the expression of voice in diverse communities and reconcile differences. However, this, according to Rhodes is in danger of 'substituting private government for public accountability ... and he fears that 'accountability disappears in the interests of the webs of institutions that make up governance' (Rhodes (2000: 77). Stoker may give a further challenge to democratic renewal, he asks: who can stand for office saying 'vote for me I can guarantee the delivery of very little because the system is very complex and the levers of control don't work?' (Stoker 2004: 192-214).

The local governance landscape is very complex. The New Labour Government has not reduced the overall number of layers. The House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee found that the number of local quangos remained at similar levels to the mid-1990s – they estimated there were 5338 local public bodies in the UK (HofC 2001: Para 27). To



address this complexity another source of increased local activity has been the requirement on many of these bodies to consult each other and produce over-arching thematic plans. Initially New Labour's creation of partnership working was chaotic and over-centralised, "chaotic centralism" (Stoker 2004: 162) or a "congested state" (Sullivan and Skelcher: 2002: 20) in which considerable amounts of time were spent on establishing new structures but in the second term the emergence of a network of local partnerships with a Local Strategic Partnership at the top was encouraged and later mandated.

A further trend of the New Labour Governments has been towards the mainstreaming of the lessons learnt by short term and area-based initiatives. Local people were not just being harnessed to work out solutions to their area's problems but they were also being expected to translate these into new ways of running and "joining up" mainstream services. In many ways this makes the role of evaluation even more crucial as mainstream spending is many times greater than urban regeneration programmes and therefore understanding "what works" is crucial.

In some ways this is a re-enforcement of the New Labour strategy of making local layers of governance responsible for delivery of services, including national services such as the National Health Service. While ostensibly empowering local people to run things better, the Government is also delegating its duty to make these services work.

A key theme of this new local emphasis is that it does not make local authorities the presumed main deliverer of local services but a plethora of supra-local organisations such as Local Strategic Partnerships are expected to give leadership and prioritise resources across all the main local services and area-based initiatives. The belief is that other stakeholders have a right to be involved in policy debates and decisions as partners not simply because ignoring them would cause problems or they might have access to resources. Perri 6 *et al* (2002: 219-33) suggest two reasons for "joining-up": first; problems can be too complex, (for example; crime) and second, people's problems are often joined up (for example; household poverty).

Perhaps because Central Government realises that these arrangements are not bound to work there is also an increasing regime of Public Service Agreement targets, Comprehensive Performance Assessment reviews and Best Value requirements as well as nationally set service targets on all the other main players, for example; Primary Care Trusts, Police, Schools etc. Indeed Stoker (ibid) suggests that “there is virtually now no field of local decision-making where local government is able to operate on its own”. For example, in its second term New Labour introduced Public Service Agreement targets by which local authorities agreed to achieve specific measurable improvements in outputs/outcomes in return for additional resources. In the third term New Labour is now rolling out Local Area Agreements which takes this trend a step further by allowing an area-based pot of funds to be increased in return for improvements across a range of key services for that locality.

The New Labour modernisation agenda (GLE 2004) is also a driver for Neighbourhood Renewal as it reflects some of the same strategies of Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Modernisation in the Government’s terms has extended to the way that local authorities are governed to try and make them more effective, responsive and accountable. In terms of transfer of learning a scrutiny function has been introduced which means that local authority members now have a duty to scrutinise their own local services and in some cases (for example: health) the services of others.

The Greater London Enterprises research report “Turning Neighbourhoods Around” found that “the focus at neighbourhood level is particularly relevant because the neighbourhood is seen as the logical level for combining public intervention with community participation” (GLE 2004: 12). Many local authorities now have area committee or neighbourhood forum type structures. The overall purposes of regeneration of an area are to be determined or agreed through Local Strategic Partnerships. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund was specifically intended to include an element of “appreciating how lessons learnt and good practice from short



term initiatives can be implemented through mainstream activities". The emphasis therefore was on transfer learning to the mainstream rather than (or as well as) to the next area-based initiative (GLE 2004: 12).

The context therefore during this study period in the first years of the new millennium is one of increasing the number of and importance local structures. This was intended to enable localities to govern themselves better, learn from area-based initiatives and pilot projects and continuously improve while implementing an increasingly top-down agenda of targets.

There has been a move away from what in retrospect seems like simple and accountable central and local structures to a plethora of supra-local partnerships, agencies and corporations populated by nominees who may never have expected to play such roles and may not have any suitable learning. For example, Local Strategic Partnerships are composed of nominees of a wide range of bodies such as the police, Primary Care Trusts and the private sector as well as members from the voluntary sector.

However, doubt has been cast over the extent to which these regimes were enabling rather than preventing learning – Stoker found that partnerships “were often launched against a background of badly designed bidding competitions and inadequate evaluation schemes... the culture of performance measurement was too often not flexible and as a result could take value out of programmes rather than put it back in”. He also found that there was too much pressure to succeed and that the resulting Best Practice transfer was hasty and centralised Stoker (2004: 163). Perri 6 (2002: 98) found that managers were more concerned to cover up failures and that practice often is only applicable in local circumstances and takes time to recognise and prove.

There is now also a drive to simplify the complexity of the area-based initiatives and other special programmes (GLE 2004: 12) which is a repeat of the situation when the Audit Commission (1989) found that there was a “patchwork quilt of initiatives”. Just as previously the Single Regeneration

Budget was introduced to rationalise programmes and was quickly followed by a vast array of complex schemes, Regional Development Agencies now have a “Single Pot” which in reality is only one source of funding among an increasing array of programmes and challenges. Within Central Government the Regional Co-ordination Unit is attempting to rein in and rationalise schemes.

Implementation of the New Labour project for more community leadership has required programmes to capacity build communities. As the Urban White Paper states: “we intend to build the capacity of communities to help themselves and bring about social cohesion right across the country”. This is an ambitious project as Imrie and Raco (2003: 21) suggest “communities are to be worked on, (re)shaped and improved (in Foucault’s terms)” and as Mulgan suggests “to be made stronger more responsible, more capable of making decisions and understanding the world in which they live” (Mulgan 1998: 11).

The reverse side of the empowering of the community is the inevitably changing role of the Civil Servant and local government professional. Whereas previously their experience and training may have allowed them to determine policy and subsequent actions they now have to moderate this with the leadership roles of the community and partners and the shared decision making of partnerships.

There is some room for local government to re-assert its role under the recently introduced responsibility for local authorities to produce Community Strategies for their area (DETR 1998) and their recent discretionary powers to expend resources of matters of community benefit. However this discretion has been reduced by the increase in the proportion of ring-fenced funding of local authorities (from 1997/8 to 2004/5) this had increased from 5% to 14%.



In summary, the world in which evaluation and the transfer of learning operates has changed to one of increased complexity, and churn, of actors and programmes and initiatives. Communities and local partnerships can now set their priorities provided that they meet Central Government requirements and they can work out what interventions and changes to the mainstream are likely to work. Never before has evaluation and transfer of learning has been more needed by so many people to meet so many challenges.

However there are some reservations about the efficacy of evaluation work undertaken as part of the New Labour project. Stoker found that much of the evaluation of the current string of New Labour initiatives amounts to no more than monitoring the operation of programmes and he suggests that the lack of sophistication or depth in the approach to evidence gathering means that a de facto strategy of “lottery” takes over from a more considered and reflective approach. He suggests that a deliberate strategy of trial and error appears to have adopted based on a lack of trust in local authorities to deliver (Stoker 2004: 5). Hood (1998: 16) suggests that the aim is to “check behaviour by making the outcomes and operations unpredictable”. He suggests that the “lottery” strategy (rather than any strategy informed by learning) reflects New Labour’s structural position, outlook, and political contingencies and he identifies four main factors at work:

- Continuing the power dependence model between local and central government.
- The starting point is a fatalistic outlook based on lack of trust and the assumption that local government will not perform unless it is incentivised and can earn autonomy/trust.
- A “prizes for all strategy” when needed to keep key players on side for example; direct support of head-teachers.
- The commitment to a permanent media campaign which Stoker suggests leads to the tendency to launch a policy initiative first and

think about the connections to other policies at a later stage (Stoker 2004: 75-77).

Rhodes (1997: 112-136) emphasises how extremely demanding the set of power relationships has become, stating that it now means that authorities have to collaborate to achieve their objectives, that they have to exchange resources and negotiate while following the rules of the game which have been set by others. It could also be added that rules frequently change and are not always clear. It is not enough for local authorities to think that they know the best way to tackle a question; they must persuade others from a wide circle of interests. A wider knowledge of “what works” would seem to be of increasing importance. However, herein lies a further dilemma, as Stoker says:

Lesson learning in a centralised system is deeply problematic. The centre may say it wants to co-ordinate the spread of good practice and give guidance but if learning is tied into accountability systems and perhaps even the threat of sanctions. The possibility of open learning is under-mined. Moreover the lessons learnt about what works often have a highly local flavour (Stoker 2004: 22).

Perri 6 reinforces this: “Public managers in fear of central sanctions will, understandably, be more concerned to cover up failures than to discuss lesson learnt frankly with colleagues” (Perri 6 et al 2002: 98).

#### **4.10 The rise in vertical tiers of governance.**

In addition to new localism New Labour Governments have also introduced new tiers of governance in Scotland (the Scottish Parliament) and Wales (the Welsh Assembly). Prior to this there had been the accession of the United Kingdom into the European Union in 1974 and subsequently a wider range of programmes that impact on urban regeneration. The various measures can be typified as being targeted thematic programmes (for example; ‘RECHAR’



for former coalfields) and structural funds which usually provide co-funding (such as the European Regional Development Fund or European Social Fund). In each case the European funding has to be matched by spending by the national government in regions that need to “catch up” with the rest of Europe. The most recent fund and the one that is most directly relevant to area-based initiatives in urban areas are the Community Initiatives which include the URBAN programme. URBAN is a highly (both spatially and thematically) targeted programme dealing with small areas of Cities.

Chapman considers that the Europe is becoming a key component in the formulation of urban regeneration strategies for many British cities. Indeed he refers to the “Europeanisation” of urban policy Chapman (1995: 73-86). In terms of evaluation and transfer of learning the following principal comments that can be made:

- There has been a significant transfer of funding and control over regeneration funding to the European-led programmes.
- The European Union requires evaluation on all its programmes.
- European programmes tend to be on an area basis and create another level of complexity in terms of which areas are European funded and which are not. This complexity is compounded by the areas and amounts of support being different for different European funds.
- All European funds require match funding and so they can sway the allocation of funding away from local priorities towards European priorities (though often these will be the same).
- European funds are all time-limited and subject to changes in European Urban Policy as well as to changes in the demographics of social exclusion and the expansion of the European Union itself.

- The European Union supports policy networks, for example; where three or more localities in different European Union countries work together to develop good practice. This is on a thematic basis (for example; urban regeneration in cities with significant waterfronts).

#### 4.11 Conclusions

This chapter has described, in brief, how the governmental context in which evaluation has developed has seen some radical changes. The rise of governance has reflected changes in society and is by no means complete at the time of this research – this is not an era of governance without government (Davies 2001: 195-220). There are still strong institutional legacies in terms of the established local and central bureaucracies, professional networks, and political parties and therefore evaluation is a product of, and must operate in, a crowded and transitional landscape.

Evaluation has been seen as increasingly important by the New Right because it ostensibly allows performance management, competition, and economy and by New Labour because it allows all those attributes but also enables evidence-based practice and informed community and partnership leadership. It has also grown in importance because as Fukuyama (1999: 4) espouses, as people have access to greater amounts of information (on the internet for example) they trust government less and demand more information about why interventions are said to work. There is also evidence that they trust their elected leaders less and increasingly feel that direct democracy such as referenda would bring better decisions (Bromley *et al* 2001: 214) this increases the need for analysis and understanding of what works to be effectively undertaken and placed in the public domain.

As new structures of governance such as Local Strategic Partnerships have emerged, evaluation has also assumed a new importance in assessing processes as well as outcomes. Networked Community Governance may also require increasing learning from evaluation and other sources because of the



inherent contradiction that in seeking to engage a wider palette of partners, networks are created but once created are closed and therefore limited in their accountability. To hold them to account, communities and Central Government need a greater understanding of what works indeed a greater transfer of learning must take place. As Rhodes has stated “networks substitute private government for public accountability” Rhodes (2000: 77).

Chapter Three has highlighted how attitudes to learning have changed and in recent years emphasis has been on life-long learning, learning by doing, learning in partnership and student centred learning. There has also been recognition that the skills required for regeneration are cross-cutting and not always gained by teaching.

The transfer of learning between urban regeneration programmes and the knowledge of what works would appear to be more important now than at any time in the past. Learning is recognised as taking place in many ways both formally and informally. It is has therefore been imperative for this study to examine both formal documentation (for example; evaluation reports) and hear from stakeholders of their various learning experiences the findings of which are reported in Chapters Six and Seven. The next Chapter examines the ways in which the practice of evaluation has emerged and evolved and responded to the changes in the arrangements in governance reported here.

## **Chapter Five: An overview of the emergence of evaluation, some conceptual and operational challenges, and a typology of evaluation.**

### **5.1 Introduction.**

This chapter explores the rise in the importance of evaluation and why it is therefore such an important area for study. Ten main reasons why evaluation has risen to such importance in urban regeneration are explored:

- The general rise in the social sciences which paralleled the development of urban policy generally;
- The New Labour Government's modernisation agenda and the emergence of new ways of working - urban regeneration has been at the heart of experimentation with new ways of working – evaluating the methods and effects may be considered to be additionally important;
- The realisation among many theorists and some policy makers that evaluations of programmes were sometimes imprecise and unhelpful in their scope and the extent to which they inform policy rather than simply react to individual policy instruments;
- The increasing spend on urban regeneration by a wide range of non-traditional bodies;
- The introduction of the competitive elements to urban regeneration (which meant that some forms of comparison are needed);
- Evaluation has become increasingly important in terms of process issues as well as project or programme outcomes;
- The lack of understanding of the problems and issues in the areas concerned;



- Evaluation, itself, is undertaken at a considerable cost to those commissioning it and the subject programmes and communities. If it is not being applied effectively it would be poor expenditure of public resources;
- The reduction in the reliance on the experience and training of civil servants and other professionals;
- Accountability to the Treasury in terms of the large amount of expenditure involved.

This Chapter also examines how the stated purposes of evaluation have changed. This is essential knowledge if judgements are to be made about how successful any transfer of learning has been. The stated purposes of evaluation are analysed from eleven sample programmes from which evaluation materials were available. It can be seen that they have changed over the period being researched. There is a mixed picture as to the objectives throughout the period but some changes of emphasis do emerge.

The earlier programmes have an emphasis on results and impacts from the intervention while the later programmes have rather more emphasis on which methods or approaches work. The later programmes also specifically ask for lessons for the future or transferable lessons. This study has examined the published documentation from urban regeneration programmes from a period of three decades and a clear shift in stated purposes can be detected. From reading of theory, typologies of evaluation have been collected and documented in this chapter and these reinforce the wide definitions that are held of “evaluation”. This chapter then discusses the evidence that casts doubt on any automatic assumption that learning has taken place and documents the many reasons why such a transfer might be limited, conditional or non-existent. Finally, the chapter finishes by acknowledging that there is documentary evidence of some transfer of learning

## **5.2 The rise in the importance of evaluation**

The evaluation of urban regeneration programmes has had increasing importance and has also evolved both in terms of the type of evaluation undertaken and the reasons why the evaluation has been undertaken. The analysis of theory for this research has led to the identification of the main reasons why evaluation has assumed the importance it has in urban regeneration. The first reason is the general rise in the social sciences which paralleled the development of urban policy generally. As stated by Rossi:

In the past few decades more and more public programmes are being evaluated systematically. At all levels of government, legislatures, executive branches and operating agencies are increasingly requiring that credible empirical evidence be generated that can show the extent to which programs are reaching their intended clients, producing intended results, and avoiding unwanted side effects....What distinguishes the systematic evaluations of the period since World War 2 from the assessments of the past is the employment of social science methodologies to generate empirical evidence on programmes' client coverage and effectiveness (Rossi 1999: 521).

Another motivating factor has been the drive to make local government more business-like and to bring private sector methods to regeneration. Burton and Boddy see: "a marked increase in the emphasis given to monitoring and evaluation in urban policy" as a result of the more general trend of introducing principles, procedures, and practices from business into the worlds of central and local government. They also consider that learning was not the main driving force: "The establishment of the Urban Programme Management Initiative heralded a renewed commitment to evaluation although its title... indicates that that its prime purpose lay more in managing locally administered grant regimes than in feeding local experience into national level policy making" (Burton and Boddy 1995: 34).



However they also found that the National Audit Office (1993) did use such evaluation data to call to account Urban Development Corporations and find significant performance gaps. Burton and Boddy also regard the emergence of City Challenge as a positive thing: “one of the more encouraging aspects of the City Challenge programme was the emphasis given to the development of a more comprehensive, ongoing regime of monitoring and evaluation” (Burton and Boddy 1995: 35).

A further reason for the rise in the importance of evaluation is the emergence of new ways of working. Urban regeneration has been at the heart of experimentation with new ways of working and therefore evaluating the methods and effects may be considered to be additionally important. Turok found that the Conservative Government appears to have subjected urban and regional development policies to closer scrutiny than many larger and more costly programmes, such as those designed to reduce registered unemployment nationally. He felt that this could be “both because of the geographical distribution of the political support...and the adverse publicity that follows high unemployment statistics” (Turok 1991: 1544).

The Urban Development Corporations were an exception to the pattern of routine evaluation of new programmes being commissioned by the sponsor department. The Department of the Environment has been criticised, given the large allocation of resources, for not undertaking systematic monitoring of Urban Development Corporations (NAO 1988). It would be unthinkable now to roll out a major new regeneration programme without ensuring evaluation. The consultancy firm Roger Tym and Partners produced guidance for local partnerships on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and they suggest that “All public policies should be evaluated, but the need is greatest in policy areas dominated by change and innovation such as regeneration” (Roger Tym and Partners 2003: 2).

The New Labour Governments since 1997 have introduced more inclusive models which have raised concerns about effectiveness. There has therefore been a need (but not always a desire?) to evaluate what was actually

happening. The importance of this has increased as new forms of working (such as partnership working) have been spread to increasingly larger subject areas, for example; Health Action Zones and Education Action Zones.

This was usefully summarised in the papers for a London Development Agency seminar which suggested reasons why regeneration programmes may need to be the subject of evaluation more than others:

- The short term nature of regeneration programmes.
- The need for quick and tangible hits.
- The innovative and piloting nature of regeneration schemes.
- The dynamic nature of programmes bounded by time/ geography and the requirement for quick results.
- The thematic imperatives of equality of opportunity, accessibility and sustainability (LDA 2002: 1).

Some major initiatives have been introduced that transformed ways of working and ownership of large urban areas and then have been abolished with the expectation that existing agencies or further new forms of experimentation will provide the exit strategy. One of the most significant of these may be the Housing Action Trusts which produced some radical changes in some of the most problematic large former council housing estates. Shaw *et al* (DETR 2000d: 5) in their Housing Action Trust evaluation report highlight the importance of sharing experiences and learning from them. They felt that within the development of area regeneration policy and practice the importance of learning and sharing learning was clear. However they do not then justify how it is “clear”, and to whom, and how the lessons are to be formally learnt by the myriad of bodies including registered social landlords, development trusts, tenants organisations etc. who will take forward this work.



Another reason for the rise in the importance of evaluation has been the realisation among many theorists and some policy makers that evaluations of programmes were sometimes imprecise and unhelpful in their scope and the extent to which they inform policy rather than simply react to individual policy instruments. There has therefore been a raft of pronouncements in recent years about the importance, not just of undertaking evaluation *per se*, but also of undertaking it in a thorough and rigorous manner. For example Lawless *et al* found that “Within Government an increasing emphasis is being placed on ensuring that policy and practice are informed through a more rigorous and challenging evidence base” (Lawless *et al* 2000: 1).

There is an implication here that the evidence that had been used to date has been less than rigorous and less than challenging and clearly lessons cannot be learnt if the research is not adequately undertaken. Alternatively there is perhaps a greater danger that the lessons which are learnt are flawed or inapplicable. This is discussed below in this chapter. Some of the weakness attributed to evaluation findings in earlier regeneration programmes may be attributed to the fact that many of the evaluations were not truly independent. The literature review has demonstrated that in most of the programmes researched up until City Challenge the evaluations were commissioned, managed and published by the sponsoring government department for the programme being evaluated. Even though the researchers were independent once appointed, the Government had a monopoly on commissioning evaluation research.

Indeed as Fearnley and Pratt state “City Challenge also introduced the idea of independent evaluation ... simultaneous with outcomes and impact”. They also point out that City Challenge evaluations introduced the idea of process evaluation in terms of how the actors achieve the programme aims through new structures and partnerships: “evaluators also look at the process and examine the partnership to evaluate how well it is working” (Fearnley and Pratt 1996: 327-351).

By the time that the subsequent Single Regeneration Budget programme was being evaluated there was greater governmental guidance on the precision needed in attaining a view of the real net impacts and the documentation of the need to ensure that lessons were being transferred. This research has found little in published documentation acknowledging that ensuring that lessons are learnt may in itself be a problem. As documented in Chapter Three it is clear that learning cannot just be assumed to happen as a result of creating and presenting the information. Dr Peter Tyler, as the leader of the National Single Regeneration Budget evaluation team in discussing this question in a paper for a University of Westminster research seminar stated guidance has encouraged more precision in defining objectives and inputs, sensitivity of establishing ‘net’ attainments rather than gross through the use of deadweight, displacement and multiplier measures and more awareness of appraisal and evaluation in informing policy and practice (Tyler 2001b).

At the same time the Government has established the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit nationally and is modernising and experimenting with new local governance structures. For the purposes of this chapter it is important to consider that evaluation will have been felt to be increasingly important because:

- New holistic, locally decided funds were being rolled out across the 88 most deprived local authority areas and each area had to decide “what works” in order to allocate it funding.
- New integrated local governance structures were being implemented in the form of Local Strategic Partnerships and they needed some way of knowing how to prioritise actions and what sort of structures and processes were likely to work.
- New local government structures have been introduced such as cabinet style working and, in some cities, elected Mayors.



- Judgement based performance regimes such as Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment have been introduced.
- A new emphasis had emerged (illustrated by the Government establishing a Regional Co-ordination Unit) in trying to reduce the plethora of local partnership bodies all delivering different pockets of regeneration activity and to try and “mainstream” this into the general public services of the area. This gives a very serious challenge for evaluators because of the danger of poorly performing initiatives being mainstreamed or projects and interventions which can make things worse rather than better being adopted because of poor evaluation or failure to ensure that adequate learning is transferred.

These points are emphasised in the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit’s first annual review by the then Minister of State, Barbara Roche:

We want to give everyone involved in renewal the chance to learn from what works – and what doesn’t work. Underpinning the vision for neighbourhood renewal is our skills and knowledge programme, which is all about learning lessons from each other and spreading good practice (NRU 2002b: 5).

The annual review goes on to emphasise the importance of learning to both area-based initiatives and the mainstream. There has also been a growing concern, apparent since the high profile Urban Development Corporation programmes, that evaluation of exactly who benefits is as important as whether a programme works in its own right. This raises a range of conceptual and methodological problems (discussed in this chapter below). Commentators such as Downer who is developing better area-based data under the title of “Vital statistics on-line” stated for example: “Measuring what changes how much and for whom is currently exercising the minds of policy makers, advisers and practitioners throughout the UK” (Downer 2001: 12).

Another driver for the increasing importance of evaluation in urban regeneration is the increased spending on urban regeneration by a wide range of non-traditional bodies. This includes National Health Service bodies, private sector companies, Development Trusts, voluntary organisations, faith organisations, Registered Social Landlords, and bodies such as the British Waterways Board and Network Rail. Bodies unfamiliar with regeneration require evidence that interventions and investments will work and this evidence now needs to meet the needs of many sectors as well as ordinary residents.

Another consideration is the introduction of the competitive element (which means that some forms of comparison are needed) since the introduction of the 'Challenge' principle to City Challenge where localities had to compete for resources. This has been carried through into such programmes as Single Regeneration Budget (actually known within the Government as the Single Regeneration Challenge Fund), the Capital Challenge programme, New Deal for Communities and Health Action Zones. For those writing bids and those deciding on funding allocations some sort of accepted evaluation of which programmes are likely to be successful under which conditions was vital. Evaluation has a key role in this contested territory.

It is not just Central Government funding that requires evaluation as most programmes now require match funding and these match funders from statutory, voluntary and private sectors in most cases demand evidence as to how their funds will be used and often demand explicit evaluation work. There have been a steady growth of initiatives to revitalise run-down areas and highlights one of the dilemmas of regeneration which is to serve both the limitations and aspirations of funders and the views of the community. Evaluation is becoming increasingly requested from all funding sources. The rise of community-led evaluation also raises a challenge for evaluators and their sponsors, which is; how to ensure that evaluation is not only examining the issues of importance to the many different actors involved but also how



can lessons be transferred across audiences with widely varying capacity to understand them?

There has also been pressure external to the United Kingdom, Chapman has helped to explain the increasing importance of evaluation as they found that European Union funding has been gradually replacing United Kingdom funding in cities and “unlike many aspects of United Kingdom urban policy the European Commission is extremely rigorous over programme and policy evaluations” (Chapman 1995: 73-86).

A further reason that evaluation has become increasingly important in terms of process issues as well as project or programme outcomes. Local Strategic Partnerships for example are measured on the effectiveness of their own ways of working and engaging with various sectors especially the community. Another reason is the lack of understanding of the problems and issues in the areas concerned. This is often known as the lack of a “baseline”, that is; if an argument is to be made for additional investment or new approaches is there an understanding and consensus on what the situation is already? The Government Minister, Hilary Armstrong highlighted a great concern about the level of pre-existing knowledge about regeneration areas. She wrote in the foreword to the Policy Action Team 18 report:

If so little is known about the social conditions in an area how can effective programmes be deployed to tackle social exclusion? If the level of deprivation is not known or reliable baselines cannot be established, it will be difficult to assess whether renewal has been successful (SEU 1998a: 5).

The Policy Action Team report then goes on to propose a strategy for integrating the information needed across Government to understand problems in socially excluded areas. A further concern is that evaluation is undertaken at a considerable cost to those commissioning it and the subject programmes and communities. If it is not being applied effectively it would be poor expenditure of public resources. Finally, there is also the reduction in

the reliance on the experience and training of civil servants and other professionals which makes some other mechanism for agreeing “what works” essential.

It can be seen from the above reasons that effective evaluations have become of increasing importance to those involved in urban policy. The question remains, however, of continuing doubts about whether the Government rhetoric about increasing learning been translated into practice. As late as 2004 a Kings Fund study found that the social programmes that they examined were not strongly evidence based and that there was:

A gap between the rhetoric of evidence based policy and what happened on the ground...interviews with Central Government make it clear that they have been designed, by and large, on the basis of informed guesswork and expert hunches enriched by some evidence and driven by political imperatives (Coote *et al* 2004: 3).

### **5.3 The stated purposes of evaluation.**

When evaluation research began to burgeon in the 1960s the emphasis was on research to determine the effectiveness of programmes. But the field has now expanded to cover research aimed at improving the design and implementation of policies and programs (Rossi 1999: 521).

The stated purposes of evaluation have been analysed from the sample programmes used in this research and are set out chronologically in summarised form in Table Four (above). It can be seen that they have changed over the period being researched. There is a mixed picture as to the objectives throughout the period but some changes of emphasis do emerge. The earlier programmes have an emphasis on results and impacts from the intervention while the later programmes have rather more emphasis on the methods or approaches which work. The later programmes also specifically ask for lessons for the future or transferable lessons. This research has been



examining the published documentation over the last three decades from urban regeneration programmes and a clear shift in stated purposes can be detected.

A Department of the Environment study published in 1986 evaluates the overall effectiveness of measures implemented under powers of the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978 to declare local improvement areas and seeks “to inform the DOE and local authorities about how the policy has developed, investigate current methods of implementation and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of policy” (DOE 1986). This was one of a number of evaluations reviewed for this study and it can be seen that the emphasis was on how the policy was operationalised, how the private sector reacted, the economic benefits and any effects on neighbouring areas. The study had five aims: To assess how the Industrial Improvement Area and Commercial Improvement Area concepts have been implemented in various areas; to compare practice adopted by different local authorities; to examine the response of the private sector in various areas; to assess the effectiveness of Improvement Area strategy and individual Improvement Areas in stabilising the economic life of older industrial and commercial areas, and achieving other benefits, and the final aim was to assess the impacts of declared Improvement Areas on neighbouring areas (DOE 1986).

There was little mention of the involvement of communities and the interface between communities and enterprise. This can be regarded as a mainly physical intervention with economic intentions whereas an evaluation (DOE 1986) published the same year of environmental initiatives funded under the Urban Programme had more concern about local residents and distribution of benefits, it sought to assess: The benefits resulting from different categories of expenditure; the distribution of benefits; the types of project which provide value for money for inner city residents and businesses; and finally the best approaches towards the implementation of environmental projects and dealing with any associated problems.

The following year an evaluation of the Enterprise Zones initiative was published which, again, concentrated on the economic factors without looking holistically at what the actual effects on the ground for communities might be. Its objectives were twofold to examine:

(1) The extent to which zones have maintained and or generated additional economic activity and employment, both on zone and in their local areas.

(2) The extent to which the zones have contributed to the physical regeneration of their local areas through the provision of infrastructure, environmental improvement and the stimulation of local property markets (DOE 1987: 1).

The Evaluation of Urban Development Grant, Urban Regeneration Grant and City Grant undertaken for the Inner City Research Programme by Aston University has an emphasis on the success of projects in their own right but also examined the wider regeneration effects and any lessons to be learnt:

The success of: the grant aided projects in contributing to the wider regeneration of the local area; individual grant aided projects in meeting their stated objectives; identification of success factors and make recommendations for future policy formulation (DOE 1988: 62).

In 1990 the National Garden Festival evaluation maintained the high level concern with economics and stated its objectives as:

To assess the cost-effectiveness of Garden Festivals in achieving the objectives listed above identifying and examining material differences in this respect between Liverpool, Stoke on Trent and Glasgow Garden Festivals. Recognition should be given to differing emphasis in objectives between the three festival projects (DOE 1990b: 1).



In 1992 the evaluation of the Government's Inner City Task Force (DOE 1992a: i) initiative still showed the primacy of cost effectiveness as a concern but did seek to find wider lessons for urban regeneration. However, it must be considered that the emphasis on cost effectiveness tests is likely to have predetermined the nature of the outcome of the evaluation and therefore limited the usefulness of any lessons learnt. The aims were documented as:

To review the effectiveness (and particularly the cost effectiveness) of the Task Force; to assess the costs and benefits of the Task Force system; to examine which objectives have been most successfully achieved and why and to draw out lessons for the future of the programme and to assess the potential long-term impact of the programme on local area regeneration (DOE 1992a: i).

By 2000 there was much greater emphasis on identifying lessons and their transfer for example the final evaluation of City Challenge stated its aims as: Assess the achievements of City Challenge projects, partnerships and the programme; identify transferable lessons, including good practice, for current and future regeneration partnerships; and contribute to the dissemination of these wider lessons (DETR 2000a: 19). These aims are important because they include the achievements of partnerships (that is; the vehicle for regeneration) and transferable lessons. There is also a duty on the evaluation team to contribute to the dissemination of these lessons which is evidence of arrangements being put in place to operationalise transfer of learning.

The emphases on the vehicles for delivery and on learning lessons and disseminating them have been carried on in subsequent programme evaluations for example; the Housing Action Trust national evaluation was very specific in these aims: "To identify the achievements of the Housing Action Trusts to date and the good practice lessons which are transferable to other urban regeneration initiatives in general ....". Other key questions asked, alongside the traditional evaluation questions regarding outputs and cost benefit analysis were:

- How have programmes for regeneration been formulated?
- How are Housing Action Trusts preparing for the long term sustainability of the regeneration achievements?
- How have Housing Action Trusts managed their community development programme and with what success? How has the interest of tenants been sustained over time? How effective have Housing Action Trusts been in helping tenants into training and jobs?
- What organisations have been involved in the regeneration programme? How have tenants been involved in developing and implementing the Housing Action Trust programme?
- How satisfied are tenants with the regeneration of the estates? (DETR 2000d: 9).

For the final Single Regeneration Budget evaluation there was a new approach to evaluating the impact of Single Regeneration Budget by assessing both the performance of the Single Regeneration Budget programme against its outcomes and the changes as shown by social surveys of the areas. The evaluation team also asked key questions which saw the evaluation challenging some fundamental assumptions about the whole area-based approach. It also concentrated on the means of delivery asking probing questions about what sorts of partnerships are effective and what are the successful and less successful elements of an Single Regeneration Budget programme (Tyler 2002b: 7-9).

By 2002 there was a discernible change of emphasis and much more of a perception of evaluation as being a tool, not just for the commissioning body, but for the all the actors in urban regeneration. The brief for the New Commitment to Regeneration evaluation is significant as this programme was being seen as a new way of working and a way of permanently changing how urban regeneration is undertaken in localities: “To inform discussion among key decision-makers, identify barriers to change and strategies that have overcome these barriers in the delivery of the Government’s New Commitment to Regeneration” (Audit Commission 2002: 3).



The brief for the New Deal for Communities evaluation was much clearer about pro-actively learning and transferring lessons. This is significant because New Deal for Communities was the largest urban regeneration programme in terms of expenditure concentration in small areas. It has allocated around £50 million into each area. A New Deal for Communities area is one of around 3000 households. The title of the evaluation report fully acknowledges this new role for evaluation: “Evidence into Practice, the New Deal for Communities National Evaluation”. The aims of the evaluation were set out by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit as:

If we are to be successful in renewing deprived neighbourhoods, we need to know what works – and what does not – and to apply the lessons not just to NDC but to implementation of the entire National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. Failure to do so would jeopardise the investment and hard work of so many in regenerating our most deprived neighbourhoods (NRU 2002a: 1).

#### **5.4 Evaluation of the mainstream.**

There is a growing argument from the New Labour Government, in particular from the Social Exclusion Unit (1998b) that mainstream services should be leading in the regeneration of areas as it is these services that spend most money and touch most people and they are permanent rather than short term.

There is now a burgeoning of activity around Best Value reviews, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA) for local government and similar performance monitoring and “best practice” initiatives for a whole range of mainstream services, for example; the Fire Service, Health Service, and the Police. There is increasing evidence of transfer of learning emerging for mainstream services, for example; the “Beacon” scheme run by IDEA which was extended in 2003 to include, not just local authorities but also

other bodies such as fire services. This scheme identifies good practice and the assists with a £5m budget for dissemination events and materials. Scrutiny of the Improvement and Development Agency web site (IDEA 2006) which contains the application guidance and forms suggests that an evaluation of a service is not a pre-requisite for a successful application for “Beacon” status.

There is a recent cross-over between researching mainstream programmes and short term regeneration programmes in the work of the Audit Commission and Select Committees of both Houses of Parliament. For example in its response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Housing, Planning and the Regions Committee’s report on the effectiveness of Government regeneration Initiatives HM Government specifically stated that the Social Exclusion Unit definition of mainstreaming includes a strong element of transfer of learning:

In the context of area-based initiatives, mainstreaming is the process of transferring policy, good practice or activity from area-based initiatives or special programmes into the core of mainstream service provision (thus making sure that best practice from area-based initiative experience is learned, disseminated, and continued within mainstream services (HMG 2003: 18).

This chapter has been able to show from a study of documentary evidence a gradual process of change that has occurred over two decades of the evaluation of urban regeneration policy. Evaluation in the 1980s tended to be top-down, mainly quantitative, commissioned by the Government and not involving partners or the community other than sometimes as beneficiaries. More recent evaluations have increasingly involved wider stakeholders and most recently have been commissioned by communities in addition to the funders. There is a pattern now of national programme level evaluation taking place alongside locally appointed evaluators. In addition there is evidence that local evaluators are “cascading” evaluation down to project managers so that they are not only the subjects of evaluation but also they are



encouraged to undertake evaluation themselves. An example is the Southampton Children's Fund Local Evaluation Pack (Wellcoat 2004).

However, this needs to be tested against the actual work that was undertaken over this time and also the perceptions and motivations of the key contemporary actors. This was the key task for the Case Studies. It is possible that unstated or understated motivations may have affected how evaluations were conducted, an example of this could be HM Treasury's Green Book (2003) (reported in Chapter Five) which lays down how all Government programmes must be evaluated and it retains its emphasis on cost benefit analysis:

Evaluation comprises a robust analysis, conducted in the same manner as an economic appraisal, and to which almost identical procedures apply. It focuses on conducting a cost benefit analysis, in the knowledge of what actually occurred rather than what is forecast to happen (HM Treasury 2003: 7.3).

## **5.5 Typologies of evaluations**

While this research has documented that there are many different uses to which evaluation is applied, there are equally many types of evaluation activities and indeed there is currently enormous growth in the range of approaches or styles. A research challenge has been to consider to what extent the type of evaluation undertaken affects the outcome of transfer of learning.

A range of possible approaches were considered in designing this research. It would have been possible to state that if inadequate methods of evaluation had been used then transfer of learning would be less likely. In considering this approach the difficulty is encountered that the adequacy or otherwise of methods is itself a matter for debate that cannot be resolved in a PhD thesis. As an example; cost benefit analysis is an established appraisal technique with many applications in the field of regeneration (HM Treasury 2003: 7.3)

this study does not seek to judge how or where it, or any other technique is applied. This study has adopted the approach of identifying and documenting the various types of evaluation and their attributes as proposed by theorists (set out in Sections 5.5.1 to 5.5.9 below). These typologies and their techniques or approaches then inform the stakeholder interviews and the analysis and synthesis stages of this research to assist in drawing conclusions.

This section is conducted at two levels. The first is a review of typologies and their analysis and the second is a “global” listing of evaluation types with an attempt to group the types into general categories and, using criticism and theory, set out their applicability to different sets of circumstances. This has enabled the production of a grouped typology of evaluation methods with analysis of applicability in a range of regeneration contexts and an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses.

### **5.5.1 Aaronovitch**

Townley and Wilks-Heeg (1999: 27-41) set out a full table of Aaronovitch’s types of evaluation with a matrix to show the main attributes. It sets out a range of types of evaluation starting with Confirmatory Evaluation which simply tells the commissioner that the programme is performing as expected. Aaronovitch then sets out a variation on that which is Legitimising Evaluation and suggests an element of active justification (that is; removing doubt over a programme or perhaps justifying it for re-funding). Another role he sees is Audit which suggests neutrality towards the purpose of the scheme but attention to whether everything is place and being done correctly. However, the Audit Commission, for example, interprets audit work more widely in its evaluation work.

Target Driven Evaluation is another one of his types and the title is probably self explanatory. This type of evaluation has assumed great importance because so much emphasis in the urban regeneration programmes studied has



been on outputs, milestone etc. Aaronovitch also introduces types which could be said to be approaches rather than types of evaluation. These are Pluralist (taking into account more than one set of views), Stakeholder (involving all those with an interest) and democratic. Democratic Evaluation suggests an active role in giving formal rights to those involved and empowering them in some way. As can be seen below, when compared with the other typologies, this typology is a summary of the multitude of variations that have been expressed and for this reason (it is almost a typology of typologies) it has been used in this research to assess the case studies reported in Chapter Six.

<b><i>Table Eleven: Aaronovitch’s typology of evaluation.</i></b>
• Confirmatory
• Legitimising
• Audit
• Target driven
• Pluralist
• Stakeholder
• Democratic (which he regarded as the form of evaluation that everyone should be seeking).

Source: Townley and Wilks-Heeg (1999: 27-41).

### 5.5.2 Lichfield.

Lichfield *et al* (1975) were working in the planning field and regarded evaluation principally as a tool for predicting the outcome of plans or proposed actions. His work on evaluation is important because he has probably produced the most comprehensive typology of evaluations and possibly the earliest United Kingdom attempt to document the wide range of possibilities. He also explicitly emphasises the need for “horses for courses” that is that the evaluation needs to suit the task and that a uniform methodology could not be adopted in all circumstances. His work has not been used as the basis for the assessment of published evaluations in this

study because he was primarily referring to ex-ante approaches and all the examples from recent urban regeneration programmes are post-hoc or in-programme. Nevertheless his insights into the challenges are summarised below as they are very valuable in considering the various types and uses of evaluation.

He identified eight families of evaluation comprised of 23 distinct methods, of which some were in the cost-benefit family. Lichfield (1996: 37) states that apart from planning balance sheet analysis of 1956, the earliest known method (checklist of criteria) was used in 1960. This indicates the comparatively recent growth of plan evaluation.

Lichfield proposed ten criteria to bring out “what plan evaluation methodology should satisfy to discharge its full function.” He emphasises the need to choose the right technique for the question and quotes a study of public transport for Manchester where ten different techniques were used for the same problem and produced ten different rankings (Lichfield 1987: Table 10.3). This has led to the conclusion that there may well be a need to synthesise different tools for a particular purpose. Lichfield presents the typology in four groups: Output (value, benefit) in the main; Input cost; Output and input; Output and input in greater width.

He states that:

It can be seen that, although the evaluation criterion is simply “worthwhileness” it can still have many dimensions, from the very narrow (output only) to the very broad (DOE structure planning and inner cities). The former is too narrow for planning evaluation; the latter addresses itself to varying questions and varying criteria, each of which could require different evaluation methods (Lichfield 1970: 154).



In dealing with cost benefit analysis Lichfield demonstrates how there is a difference in the kind of costs and benefits that each type of decision-taker might be interested in. He proposes Community Impact Analysis as a way of including a wide range of off-site impacts including the perceptions of stakeholders.

He proposes the following as a guide for evaluators:

- That the object of the plan is to advance the welfare of the community concerned.
- That the community is defined by the extent of the various impacts, not administrative boundaries.
- Different parts of the community will be impacted upon differently and therefore will favour different schemes or elements.
- “Political” choices have to be made about who gains/suffers.
- All these varying communities affected by different impacts should be externalised so that a choice can be made (Lichfield 1970: 154).

Lichfield then examines the theory and principles of Community Impact Evaluation. This is derived from developing elements of the theory on Impact assessment so, for example, impacts and their effects on the varying communities are studied to create an “impact chain” that is; linking effects to people. He describes this “as a major departure from conventional effect impact assessment which generally speaking has tended to see impacts as just scientific phenomena by themselves”. He also points to one of the difficulties being the definition of the “community”, there being some 94 different meanings identified by Herbert and Raine (1976: 325-38).



**Table Twelve: Lichfield’s typology.**

<b>Outputs only</b>	<b>Both input and output</b>
Checklist of criteria	Financial analysis
Quality of service	Social financial analysis
Norms and standards	Cost revenue analysis
Goals/objectives	Planning and programme
Linear programming	Budgeting
Impact assessment	Cost-benefit analysis
Fiscal/financial	Single objective
Environmental	Cost effectiveness
Social	Cost minimization
Urban/community impact	Cost-benefit analysis:
Multi-attribute	Multiple objective
Multi-criteria	Framework appraisal
	Policies, assessment summary
<b>Inputs only</b>	Optimization
Unit costs UC	Cost-benefit matrix
Threshold analysis	Planning balance sheet analysis
Costs in use	Community impact analysis
	Social audit

Source: Lichfield (1975: 45-64).

**5.5.3 Greene.**

Greene (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 981-999) suggests that there has been a “journey of evaluations conducted qualitatively”. She finds that “constructivist, qualitative approaches to program evaluation emerged within the United States evaluation community in the 1970s ... in tandem with two significant evolutions in intellectual thought and societal beliefs” which she describes as the dethronement of experimental science as the paradigm for

social programme evaluation and changes in the belief systems of United States society (decline in authority of standard social science theory, decline in authority accorded political figures following Vietnam etc and a more pluralist society)....“In its contemporary form social program evaluation is a young field”. She summarises the journey of evaluations as follows:

- Black box evaluations there was an early ‘great society’ era when ‘black box evaluations’ were carried out, that is; program impacts measured comparing those that had benefited with those that had not. “Little attention being given to programs as implemented or experienced”.
- “Starting in the early 1980s a number of evaluation theorists began to re-argue for the importance of theory-driven evaluation and evaluations directed at understanding and assessing a program’s theory of change”. These evaluations also contributed to a wider understanding about how social interventions work.
- “Offering some counter-point to the reclamation of program theory as an important evaluation agenda is the expanding development of participatory and collaborative approach to evaluation”.
- She suggests (after Shadish et al 1991) that at the time of writing “Utilization-orientated participatory evaluators are advancing the significant role evaluation can play in organisational learning.”
- Social action-orientated participatory evaluators are advancing the significance of evaluation’s potential for broadening and deepening our deliberations and dialogues about important social issues (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 981-999).



She also attempts to categorise evaluation approaches in Table Thirteen:

**Table Thirteen: Greene’s typology of evaluations.**

<b>Epistemology</b>	<b>Primary values promoted</b>	<b>Key audiences</b>	<b>Preferred methods</b>	<b>Typical evaluation questions</b>
Postpositivism.	Efficiency, accountability, cost-effectiveness, policy enlightenment.	High level policy and decision-makers, the social science community.	Quantitative: experiments and quasi-experiments, surveys, causal modelling, cost benefit analysis.	Are intended outcomes attained and attributable to the program? Is this program the most efficient alternative?
Utilitarian pragmatism.	Utility, practicality, managerial effectiveness.	Midlevel program managers and on site administrators.	Eclectic, mixed: structured and unstructured surveys, interviews, observations, document analyses, panel reviews.	Which programme elements work well and which need improvement? How effective is the programme with respect to the organisation’s goals and mission? Who likes the programme?
Interpretivism/constructionism.	Pluralism, understanding, contextualism, personal experience.	Program directors, staff, and beneficiaries.	Qualitative, case studies, open-ended interviews and observations, document reviews, dialectics.	How is the program experienced by the stakeholders? In what ways is it meaningful?
Critical social sciences.	Emancipation, empowerment, social change, egalitarianism, critical enlightenment.	Program beneficiaries and their communities, activists.	Participatory, action orientated: stakeholder participation in evaluation agenda setting, data collection, interpretation and action.	In what ways are the premises, goals, or activities of the programme serving to maintain power and resource inequities in this context?

Source: Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 981-999).

Greene also identifies evaluation as “a narrative craft that involves the telling of stories with the aim of understanding, and often action, as the improvement of practice or the reframing of the policy conversation, toward

the appreciation of pluralism and complexity” (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 989-992).

#### **5.5.4 Barnekov.**

Barnekov *et al* (1990: 123-137) have a much more technocratic approach as they suggest that three main types of evaluation have been used since the mid 1960s, those that are concerned respectively with technical efficiency, effectiveness, and economic efficiency. However, these terms do also suggest that value judgements must be made; for instance who is to be the judge of effectiveness?

#### **5.5.5 Scriven.**

Scriven’s Evaluation Thesaurus documents a whole range of evaluation types ranging from the Connoisseurship model:

Elliot Eisner’s model based on premise that the artistic and humanistic considerations in evaluation are more important than scientific ones, no quantitative analysis is used. The connoisseur-evaluator examines the product or programme at first hand. It is vulnerable to the fallacy of irrelevant expertise (Scriven 1991: 92).

through to Black Box evaluation (Global Summative Evaluation) this he describes as: “overall an often brief evaluation provided without any suggestions for improvements, identification of causes etc – frequently all that is needed, for example in a consumer evaluation” (Scriven 1991: 74). To emphasise that evaluations can be many different things for many different purposes Scriven suggests a further twenty two types.



#### **5.5.6 Fetterman.**

Fetterman is a leading member of the American Evaluation Association. He provides online teaching materials (Fetterman 2003) with the focus being on active and inclusive forms of evaluation of the following types: Collaborative; Participatory; Empowerment and Ethnographic. Fetterman extensively documents and promotes Empowerment Evaluation and he describes it as:

The use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination. It employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Although it can be applied to individuals, organizations, communities, and societies or cultures, the focus is usually on programs (Fetterman 2000: 2).

He explains that empowerment evaluation has an unambiguous value orientation that is; it is designed to help people help themselves and improve their programmes using a form of self-evaluation and reflection. Programme participants conduct their own evaluations while an outside evaluator often serves as a coach or additional facilitator. Fetterman regards Empowerment Evaluation as the culmination of the development of techniques such as Action Research; Action Anthropology; Community Psychology, Collaborative Evaluation and Participatory Evaluation.

#### **5.5.7 McAllister.**

McAllister rather than setting out a typology, proposes the following criteria for assessing evaluation methods: systematic; simple; quick; inexpensive; legally acceptable and comprehensive (McAllister 1986: 277-278). He also suggests three questions that can help distinguish evaluation techniques: What categories and impacts are used for estimating impacts?; How are the

magnitudes of impacts to be estimated?; How are the ratings which indicate the relevant importance of each impact to be measured? In his conclusions McAllister deals with the following issues arising from the attempts at systematic or “grand index” forms of evaluation:

**Table Fourteen: McAllister’s issues arising from attempts at Grand Indexes.**

- Role of experts.
- Selection of categories and measures.
- Identifying goals.
- Quantification of impacts.
- Equity.
- Effect on future generations.
- Feasibility (Source: McAllister 1986: 277-278).

However his main concern about “grand index” methods is that they remove the assessment from the personal to a composite social score and “seem to tell people what their attitudes ought to be”. A proposal he makes is for evaluation reports to include statements highlighting the strengths of alternatives or use of spoken arguments about alternatives. He also states “evaluation is an art more than a science” (McAllister 1986: 277-278).

**5.5.8 Roger Tym and Partners.**

Roger Tym and Partners (2003: 2.5) in their good practice guide suggest that there are three kinds of evaluation: “final, interim, and rolling” They also promote the idea that local regeneration partnerships should undertake all three with somewhat differing main purposes. The final evaluation has an outward looking focus to: “discharge the duty of accountability”... “to, above all, the people whom the programme was set up to benefit and government, local authorities and other agencies”. The interim evaluation’s main function is to help improve performance and the rolling evaluation “involves Government Offices/Regional Development Agencies in a supervisory role because it is directly linked to the continuation of funding..”. This explains in



a clear sense some of the different roles for evaluation and also the importance of the timing of evaluation in relation to the programmes being evaluated (Roger Tym and Partners 2003: 2.5).

#### **5.5.9 Anne E. Casey Foundation.**

This foundation promotes Theory of Change evaluation as a preferred method for evaluating community and family/children based projects:

In simple terms, a theory of change lays out the cause (action) and effect (result) relationships and the beliefs behind a project or initiative (Anne E. Casey Foundation 2003: 2).

This foundation promotes this as a planning tool as well as an evaluative tool they also promote self evaluation as part of a toolkit for evaluating and reconfiguring systems of foster caring: “Using hard data linked to child and family outcomes to drive decision-making and to show where change is needed and where progress has been made”. This method of evaluation is used in the evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NRU 2003a: v and 133).

#### **5.6 Commentary on the typologies.**

This overview of the wide range of evaluation types and the lack of common ground among the various typologies demonstrates that evaluation is still a fluid and contested art or science. There is no established right and wrong in terms of which forms evaluations should take. There are emergent trends, two such trends identified by this research are:

- The tendency towards more empowering, pluralist and stakeholder type evaluations which can be seen as a product both of the turn away from quantitative and scientific approaches.

and

- The emergence of governmentality as discussed in Chapter Four as a climate in which localities take responsibility for ensuring that they themselves are being effective (even if they did not set the objectives or the rules themselves).

In addressing the research hypothesis, concerning the transfer of learning, it can simply be noted that there are many ways in which such a transfer could take place. Evaluation is clearly undertaken for many different reasons by people with many different objectives. However, there is a body of theory, demonstrated above and best illustrated by Fetterman (2000: 2), which suggests that more inclusive and more empowering methods will lead (inevitably?) to learning by virtue of the process itself.

Other forms of evaluation which are more top-down confirmatory or audit type evaluations may depend on effective writing up, dissemination and contextual relevance in the next programmes for learning to take place. This means that there is not a natural or inevitable transfer of learning. The transfer of learning still has to be achieved once the results are known.

Having considered that there is a vast selection of possible evaluation types and approaches it is important to realise the complex difficulties faced by those who want to learn and pass on learning. The next section addresses these questions.

### **5.7 Testing the “transfer of learning” assumption.**

It has been stated above that there has been a concerted drive to introduce management by objectives, targets, and performance measures but there is little common ground about what are the most suitable measures of performance. Early regeneration programmes such as the Urban Development Corporations and City Challenge have been heavily criticised



for being property led or “top-down”. While the Single Regeneration Budget programmes adopted a much broader range of objectives and were based on locally developed programmes, it is said that the community had inadequate input in setting the objectives and indicators of success. The current programmes (for example; New Deal for Communities) are intended to be community-led and community designed, including the outputs, outcomes sought and indicators of success.

The Single Regeneration Budget programme used an extensive collection of possible outputs as indicators of success. These were grouped into eight categories including jobs, education, business, housing, land community facilities, and publicly provided facilities such as health centres. These outputs enabled a comprehensive programme to be quantified so that, on a simplistic level, comparisons could be made between bids. Bidders would claim to produce quantified outputs for a set financial input. They would then be judged on their achievement of these outputs. However commentators have found there to be many flaws in this approach.

In the review of the Single Regeneration Budget Round Two, Hall (1996) considered this and found that the system ‘worked against recognising the contribution of the voluntary sector. They thought that output measures are often not conducive to supporting contributions from voluntary and community sector groups. Hall also later highlighted (Hall 2000: 1-14), after reviewing three rounds of the Single Regeneration Budget programme that there was an inherent conflict between the aim of new localism and the centrally competitive element of the Single Regeneration Budget programme.

This raises the questions of: who sets the indicators? In whose interest they are set? And what effect do they have on a partnership and its programme? Many targets are now set by partnerships; Brownill and Darke (1998: 3) propose that partnerships are not just about structures and representation but also about ways of working. They complain that it is hard for usually excluded groups to engage meaningfully with partnerships because of their

ways of working and they highlight the “output driven” nature of partnerships as a particular problem. Not only may the indicators not accurately measure success or failure but they may, in themselves, be a structural barrier to achievement. If parties are all expected to work towards goals agreed by a consensus or a majority at a partnership they may be missing more important objectives of their own.

The evaluation priorities of the private sector, for example, may not be in the best interests of the community. Adair *et al* (1999: 2031-2045) considered the priorities of the private sector and found that they relate largely to such things as risk and clarity of procedures and outcomes. Oc, Tiesdell and Moynihan (1997) discuss the way in which the same output can have different effects on different individuals. They use as an example training provided by City Challenge training programmes and highlight “the relentlessly individual nature of training and its impact on the employability of individuals”. This, they suggest, means that within one area of indicators “Training Outputs” there must be tailoring to the individuals involved. This would require a much more intense level of monitoring but is perhaps necessary if accurate evaluation is to be achieved?

A further question raised by Oc *et al* (1997) is; how meaningful are the indicators? They state that the City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget Outputs can be criticised for being naïve and imprecise, for example; one job created could be at the expense of four jobs lost outside the area. There is no measure of the quality of the job or how long it lasts. Programmes would report as “jobs created” temporary posts which were created to run parts of the programme itself.

Work has been undertaken on trying to refine indicators of success in urban regeneration. An example is Gardiner (1998: 1519-1540) who challenges the usefulness of the basic data set then used by partnerships - the Census. He demonstrates how by using the two per cent Sample of Anonymised Records available for the first time after the 1991 census “refinements (could be) incorporated into the construction of indicators with potential improvements



in the targeting of policy initiatives towards specific sub-groups". He suggests that to judge effectively the success of programmes a much more detailed data-set should be used and that this could result from improvements to the next census. Work has subsequently been undertaken to develop neighbourhood statistics and to refine data into Super-Output Areas.

O'Regan and Quigley illustrate the complex inter-relationships behind any individual indicator. They study the effects of spatial residential patterns on employment outcomes for "minority" households. They show how for different ethnic groups the same indicator of "success" can have substantially different effects. They state "The results confirm the fact that the largest source of disparities in employment rates between white and minority youth is the discrepancy between the average human capital and household characteristics between white and minority youth" (O'Regan and Quigley 1998: 1180-1203).

The level of analysis carried out in the United States by O'Regan and Quigley (1998) is rarely undertaken when English regeneration projects are evaluated and yet they point to significant unintended consequences of successful achievement of outputs. In their case study merely creating more jobs without tackling the social infrastructure could make ethnic minority youth comparatively worse off.

Hotchkiss *et al* (1999: 1079-1091) demonstrate that indicators have to be analysed for their efficacy in their context. They demonstrate how one indicator on its own (% success of City residents in being appointed to posts applied for) would show the programme as a failure in targeting. However when seen alongside a second indicator (numbers of city residents applying compared to non-city residents) the programme was shown to be a success. Even though residents were comparatively less successful, because of the programme more were applying and therefore more residents were being appointed than non-residents.

There is also the problem of programmes being swayed by output orientated indicators. This can lead to a focus on targets at the expense of delivering a holistically balanced programme. There is a contemporary parallel in the current debate about National Health Service waiting lists. Achieving one target, it is said could be at the expense of achieving other, clinically more important, targets. Until later rounds of the Single Regeneration Budget programme and the New Deal for Communities the “basket” of outputs was a nationally set one. There was scope for having additional programme level outputs but these were not regarded as being as important in determining programme success, and therefore funding.

A further weakness of output target based regeneration has been found to be the association of achieving the targets with success in regeneration. Brownill and Darke (1998: 32) suggested: “the setting of targets can promote a mechanistic way of thinking, equating regeneration with the delivery of outputs...” They propose that inclusive regeneration is a process that runs through all stages of regeneration. Seeing outputs as part of such a process can lead to “creativity in setting targets”. They recommend “innovative methods for monitoring outcomes, including qualitative measures and involving residents”.

Indicators of success in regeneration are characterised by being based on outputs or outcomes set by the partnerships themselves. Inevitably they are based on the expectations of the partnerships and providers and, not necessarily, those people in whose name regeneration is undertaken. Therefore it is quite possible for a programme to deliver 100% of targets but to fail completely to meet the expectations of the community being regenerated. This problem should be being addressed now that community involvement is a requirement in bid preparation for New Deal for Communities schemes and in the preparation of community strategies by Local Strategic Partnerships.



Hastings *et al* (1996) emphasise the importance of community involvement at all stages in the process as a way of ensuring that the programme and its outputs/outcomes are in tune with the community's needs and priorities. Indeed, in community development terms, they suggest that the level and nature of community involvement itself is an indicator of success for programmes. They propose a series of tests for the success of community involvement based on the impact made by the community at each stage of the process. They also suggest predictors for successful community involvement by examining the history of the community structures that had a successful input (Hastings *et al* 1996: 45-47).

Indicators must therefore be regarded as limited by the era in which they were created and the vision or lack of it of those who set them. They also tend to reflect the values (or lack of values) of their proposers. Contemporary programmes place a higher emphasis on community visioning and this will no doubt lead to new challenges in setting indicators of success. Organisations such as the Groundwork Trust have developed tools for measuring the success of community engagement and for involving the community in the evaluation process (Groundwork 2000).

Indicators may also be suitable for one purpose but not another, for example; testing economic or financial liability. There is increasing emphasis on process indicators to balance output/outcome targets. The concept of using process indicators is developed in the work of Gwilliam *et al* (1998: 10) who develop "drivers for change" in order to evaluate the success of initiatives in suburban areas. These drivers are then applied to the set of outcomes for the programmes. This is a dynamic form of contextually relevant evaluation as the tool is designed for the task. Current rounds of regeneration challenge programmes, for example; New Deal for Communities and SRB6 rely much more on locally determined outcomes rather than adherence to nationally set outputs. Effective evaluation of these will be a challenge and will require some similar exercise to that undertaken by Gwilliam *et al*. This concept is also used by Moseley who uses Parish Appraisals as an example of where the

process of undertaking the appraisal may be just as important as any works that follow publication. Having researched practice across the UK and theory he writes about the “duality of purpose” in assessing both the processes and the product which are of interest to different stakeholders (Moseley 1997: 200). If indicators are used more to test if the processes are right and less to measure if pre-determined outcomes are being met there is greater scope for evaluation to be of more value to programmes throughout their life and also for lessons to be transferable.

## **5.8 Reasons why the transfer of learning assumption can be questioned.**

### **5.8.1 The timing of evaluations.**

This research has found (Chapter Six) that the timing of evaluations often means that the next programme has been announced before the evaluation of the previous one is complete. This has also been found to be true with the use of “Pathfinder” programmes (programmes that pilot or trial approaches prior to the national roll-out). As an example; as recently as 2005 the Neighbourhood Management Network (NMN 2005: 5) reported that “the neighbourhood management way of working is spreading long before the results of the Pathfinder programme are known”. Another problem with timing is that the programme may be effectively wound up by the time the evaluation takes place. The evaluation of the Government’s Inner City Task Force initiative (DOE: 1992a: i) states that they commenced after the three Task Forces closed. The Task Force staff had dispersed and the leaders started new jobs:

This increased the difficulty of making a prompt start to the evaluation, in arranging the interview programme, and in gaining the detailed knowledge of Task Force staff ... evaluation would run more smoothly, with no loss of independent assessment, if it could start some two or three months before the date of the Task Force closure (DOE: 1992a: i).



Another element of timing is the fact that regeneration programme results can take many years to be measurable (in some cases they may never be) and the lessons learnt can only be partial at best. For example in studying partnerships and capacity building in the regeneration of peripheral industrial locations in London, Bailey found that: "Evidence from both areas suggests that social and economic regeneration is a long term process probably only measurable over decades" Bailey (1997: 275). Redfearn (2005a) reported that after four years of programme life the soon to be published evaluation of Sure Start would not have been running long enough for reliable findings to be reached. A powerful example of the timing problem is the transition from City Challenge to Single Regeneration Budget. Fearnley and Pratt find that the timing had been a definite barrier to learning transfer:

The extent to which lessons of City Challenge will be learnt is now in doubt. Just two and a half years into City Challenge the Single Regeneration Budget will replace it meaning that the lessons of these evaluations cannot be taken on board... the Single Regeneration Budget encompasses many characteristics of its predecessor, and many issues arising from the evaluation of City Challenge would be relevant to it but it came too early for findings from these evaluations to be taken into account and to truly know what the successes were and what were the failures of this type of policy (Fearnley and Pratt 1996: 327-351).

Turok, after reviewing a range of programmes found that evaluation studies' conclusions may be found "too late to influence policy in a major way" (Turok 1991: 1543 -50). The rush to introduce new programmes seems to have been a barrier to learning in some cases this may have been deadlines outside the United Kingdom Government's control. For example in one European programme it was found that: "The newness of Community Economic Development in the 1994-96 Structural Funds meant that too little time had elapsed by the time of the evaluations for employment benefits to accumulate (Armstrong *et al* 2002: 457-481)".



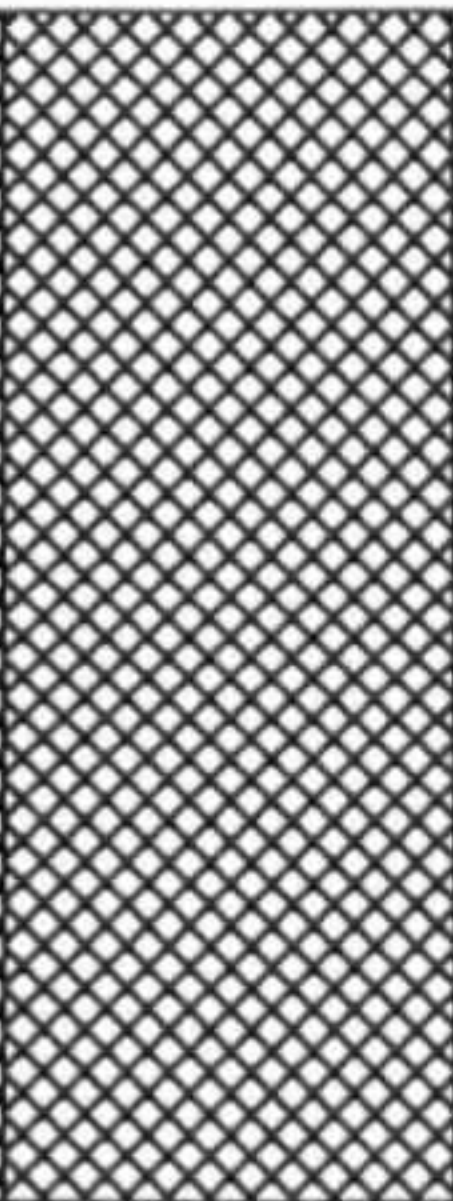





**Table Fifteen: Timing of evaluation work in relation to programmes**

Programme/Year	69	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	R	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03
Urban Programme	Black	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Enterprise Zones			Black	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Vertical Lines	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Industrial and Commercial Improvement Area				Black	Grey	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Urban Development Grant, Urban Regeneration Grant.					Black	Grey	Grey	Grey	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Grey	Grey	Grey	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Checkered	Checkered	Checkered	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
City Grant					Black	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Checkered	Checkered	Checkered	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Garden Festivals							Black	Grey	Grey	Grey	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Diagonal Lines	Grey					Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Inner City Task Force								Black	Black	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Vertical Lines	Diagonal Lines				Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
City Challenge																	Grey	Checkered	Vertical Lines	Diagonal Lines	Grey	Grey	Diagonal Lines				
Housing Action Trusts																	Grey	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Vertical Lines	Checkered	Grey	Grey	Grey
Single Regeneration Budget																		Black	Grey	Grey	Grey	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines
New Deal for Communities																			Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Black	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Vertical Lines	Checkered	Grey
New Commitment to Regeneration																									Black	Vertical Lines	Diagonal Lines



Table Fifteen: Timing of evaluation work in relation to programmes: Key and comment.

Key	Shading
Programme start	
Evaluation	
In programme report	
Programme period	
Robson report on Urban Policy	
Post-hoc report	

Was timing an issue in the transfer of learning?

This table shows the period of life for each evaluation programme and the point(s) during the life of the programme when evaluation was undertaken. One of the conditions necessary for learning to be passed on is that the evaluation work should have been timed to permit this i.e. that one programme had been evaluated before the next one was designed or started. This table visually demonstrate that earlier programmes were launched in advance of evaluations of previous initiatives but there was a trend for later programmes to be launched evaluation reports from previous programmes had been published. It has to be considered, however, that the policy makers would have been involved in the commissioning and supervision process for evaluations and therefore there may have been internal overlap where lessons could be learnt in the pre-publication stage of evaluation work.



### **5.8.2 The absence of evaluation activity.**

In some of the, arguably, more controversial cases there has been criticism of the lack of evaluation activity. As an example, the Urban Development Corporations experiment was criticised for “critical evaluation of its legacy being elusive even though it had by then been closed down” (Florio and Brownill 2000: 53). They give as possible reasons why this evaluation may not have taken place: Loss of interest; ideological disillusionment; a shift in political values and planning practices or a change in the London Docklands Development Corporation’s *modus operandi*. The London Docklands Development Corporation produced a series of ten “monographs” which portrayed its own view of its success. One claimed weakness of this internally created post-hoc justification is that the claims “seem to be based on a re-interpretation of history” (Florio and Brownill 2000: 55) .

Imrie and Thomas were taken aback by the “ferocity of their grillings” when they approached Cardiff Bay Urban Development Corporation to undertake an independent evaluation and reported that other policy researchers had received “much rougher treatment”. They conclude: “At the root of these aggressive reactions is the antipathy to external evaluation of an organisation which typifies key trends in urban policy in the 1990s” (Imrie and Thomas 1999: 123-137).

These earlier examples of reluctance to undertake evaluation appear from this study to be isolated as all the other programmes researched in this study have had formal evaluations published. That still leaves a question as to the extent to which programmes are fully evaluated as in each case terms of reference are drawn and some elements of the programmes are included and some excluded.



### **5.8.3 The quality of evaluation activity.**

This study has found many weaknesses and difficulties in evaluation practice leading to concerns about the quality of any conclusions that can be drawn. There is no formal benchmarking or accreditation system for evaluations in England (though there is guidance on the United Kingdom Evaluation Society's website no reference to this has been found in any of the published evaluations) so there seems to have been no accepted regime of quality assurance. The standards therefore have to be agreed between the client and the evaluator (with possibly an external funder influencing it) the client may also be the body running the programme being evaluated. An example of highlighted weaknesses is contained in the interim evaluation of the regeneration of former coalfield areas (DETR 2000c) which found that the evaluation of regeneration activities needed to be conducted more frequently and systematically in ways which that went beyond project management and engaged local businesses and people in the process .

A team (headed by Professor Lawless) in examining the evidence to support area-based initiatives suggests a hierarchy of evidence that ranges from “rich and convincing data” through to “observation and description” and they found that:

A considerable body of evidence is available examining the practice of area-based regeneration and the specific impacts that individual initiatives have achieved. In the past this evidence has not generally been collected or analysed in a common fashion, and evaluations have had to deal with a number of technical problems. This diversity in approach and constraints on evaluation practice limit the degree to which informed and rigorous lessons can be drawn from the experience gained over the last 20 years (Lawless et al 2000: 7).

Lawless, however does suggest that this may improve: “evidence currently being assembled to assess new area-based initiatives such as Single Regeneration Budget, New Deal for Communities and health... should add considerably to our knowledge of what works and why” Lawless et al (2000: 7).

#### **5.8.4 Methodological difficulties.**

There are a wide range of difficulties in designing any form of evaluation but evaluating complex initiatives (with up to 80 active projects) in fast changing areas with numerous different partnerships active at any one time is a typical challenge with programmes such as the Single Regeneration Budget (which, ironically, was introduced to simplify the regeneration landscape). It is an example of a complex programme to evaluate but this could be attributed to the fact that it is an holistic programme embracing many regimes that were previously evaluated separately. Tyler in assessing these difficulties stated at a seminar that in terms of difficulty of evaluation the Single Regeneration Budget was probably top of the list (Tyler 2001b).

#### **5.8.5 Documentation and dissemination of findings**

There has been a drive led by the Audit Commission, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and others such as the Joseph Rowntree Research Foundation in recent years to emphasise documentation and dissemination of findings.

However as recently as 2000 the interim evaluation of the regeneration of former coalfield areas found that there “appeared to be little awareness of the availability or relevance of existing evaluation evidence with respect to what might be realistic but testing targets” (DETR 2000c: 3) and in commenting on the launch of Open Information for Birmingham (a regeneration information and practice dissemination web-site) Churchill was able to state: “Evaluations have tended to be hidden from the public domain and knowledge has been wasted” (Churchill 2001: 12-13).



The mere presence of evaluation activity is not enough, it also has to be coherently set out and interpreted so that the right lessons are made for each partnership or area concerned and it is not clear how this is to be achieved. Harding commented as recently as 2002 that:

Masses and masses of 'urban intelligence' reaches Whitehall through project evaluations, research programmes, audits and informal interactions with 'deliverers'. But this knowledge doesn't add up to a coherent view of the performance of towns and cities. Neither does it provide a compelling analysis of the key driving forces shaping urban futures regionally, nationally and inter-nationally (Harding et al 2002: 14).

Lawless et al (2000: 2), looking across a broad field of regeneration policy and practice, found that: "The evidence base has not impacted as much as it might have done. A considerable proportion of evidence fails to engage the policy community. This may be due to the apparent unwillingness of researchers fully to identify the policy implications of new evidence".

These problems are now being addressed by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's "Knowledge Management System" which is intended to overcome some of the problems set out above.

A further difficulty is that if evaluations are looking at the wrong things the lessons might never be learnt and wrong conclusions may be drawn. In his overview of the evidence for the success of area-based initiatives Lawless was not optimistic about the state of evaluation:

Programme wide evaluations have tended to identify net output costs rather than focus on outcomes; inadequate attention has been given to inter-relationships amongst different policy strands such as education, health and crime and housing; programme evaluations say little about what is happening on the ground within individual projects and they

provide little in the way of transferable lessons to practitioners during the lifetime of the programme involved (Lawless et al 2000: 2).

He is also critical of the increasing emphasis on the dissemination of “Best Practice” which is widely promoted but for which this research has found little consistent justification:

Partnerships may be reluctant to allocate a stream of resources to evaluation work; research charities and the research councils have supported work which has enhanced the evidence base. However, the former have tended to concentrate on good practice case study based research which often lacks rigour (Lawless et al 2000: 2).

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2002c: 22-23) in examining evaluation found that for many area-based initiatives evaluation remains a secondary activity, subordinate to the more immediate tasks of programme and project delivery and performance monitoring. They also found that the evaluation of area-based initiatives remains piecemeal and not as advanced as might be expected. With only a few exceptions each area-based initiative is evaluated in its own right on a programme by programme basis. However the priority areas tend to have numerous area initiatives so some sort of more holistic evaluation may be needed. This suggests the need for some sort of national, regional and local framework for evaluation and sharing lessons.

Turok found that “a frequent criticism is that they (evaluation studies) become ends in themselves and get side-tracked by technical considerations of limited practical relevance” (Turok 1991: 1543-50). He then refers to Barnekov et al (1990: 232-3) who found that evaluation has little impact compared to political choices in decision making. Turok also found that indicators and targets set by urban regeneration programmes were “sometimes deliberately limited and introspective” (Turok 1991: 1543-50).



#### **5.8.6 Knowing what works - Role of Best Practice award schemes.**

If transfer of learning is to take place there needs to be some acceptance of what is “good” and what is not and how this might vary with context. Roberts and Sykes suggest that one problem is that “there is no single or precise agreement as to what constitutes best practice and, as a consequence, what is considered to be excellent in one locality or sector or activity may be disregarded elsewhere” (Roberts and Sykes 2000: 298). They point to the importance of calculating the wider added value of regeneration schemes. They point to two particular problems: The tendency to confuse effectiveness with efficiency and an absence of any real attempt to gauge the overall consequences or results that flow from regeneration efforts. They also suggest the need for a more holistic approach to evaluation:

There are as yet no fully evaluated longitudinal studies of integrated action across an entire conurbation.... At present the precise calculation of the long term overall added value of urban regeneration remains a matter of speculation (Roberts and Sykes 2000: 298).

Lawless (1995: 261-70) has argued that this problem reflects a lack of primary research and literature, especially related to the practice of urban policy and the lessons that can be gleaned from study of international experience.

### **5.8.7 Conceptual and data problems.**

Tyler has found, in examining a large number of Single Regeneration Budget programmes, that evaluation work has not been able to assess systematically the impact of area-based initiatives on overall regeneration outcomes because of a number of conceptual and data problems. He has highlighted a number of barriers to greater co-ordination of evaluation. These included:

- The different spatial bases for many initiatives and hence a difficulty in comparing like with like;
- Different agendas, interest and focus for many initiatives and hence difference in the identification and specification of what should be evaluated;
- Different baselines (in terms of spatial scale, time and content);
- Problems with securing information from neighbouring Boroughs and initiatives which are seen to be in direct competition;
- Problems around exit strategies, with no area-based initiative wanting to admit failure and therefore unwillingness to address evaluation in a joined up way in case it shows up inadequacies (NRU 2002c: 10-11).

He was concerned about sustainability and saw learning transfer as crucial:

With few mechanisms for ensuring that successful initiatives continue (in the mainstream or as projects) there is little commitment to thinking about sustainability. There is a real danger that the work of the ABIs may be lost when the initiatives come to an end. Government, both central and local, should invest in transfer of learning from ABIs into mainstream delivery (NRU 2002c: 30).

In some cases, such as for the Sure Start programme, guidance has been issued to assist evaluators in dealing with how to attribute costs and benefits between programmes in areas of multiple area-based initiatives. Though in the case of Sure Start the guidance states that it “is really a matter of common-sense” (NESS 2001: 48).



### **5.8.8 Political leadership and imperatives.**

There is some evidence that political dictat has determined the design of programmes for example Stewart (1998) found that “in particular we see programmes where political imperatives over-ride functional efficiency to the detriment of both proper public administration and political achievement”. He also refers to the replacement in the 1980s of the ‘ensemble’ of regulatory practice by a “cacophony of dissonance”. He was referring to the proliferation of new agencies and partnerships (Stewart 1998: 77-90).

## **5.9 Conclusions**

This chapter has set the context for the research that follows by showing how the evaluation of urban regeneration programmes has gained in importance, how its application has been for widely varying reasons, and how the application and purposes of evaluation have changed over time. It has also shown the severe difficulties that there have been in developing any consistent or coherent approach to evaluation over the years and the many barriers that there are to learning being transferred. Nevertheless there is some clear evidence from theory of lessons being transferred. The documentary analysis and case studies as set out in the following chapters examine what actually happened by researching both the documentation and by speaking in depth to contemporary actors.

## **Chapter Six: Documentary analysis of evaluation in reports.**

### **6.1 Introduction.**

This chapter presents an overview of the evolution of area-based urban regeneration initiatives in England and examines the types of evaluation that have been undertaken. It seeks to highlight changes in the way in which evaluations have been executed and any evidence that lessons learnt in evaluating one programme have been passed on to others. The selection of programmes covers the period from the evaluation of Industrial and Commercial Improvement Areas in 1986 through to the present day (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and New Deal for Communities).

Themes that have emerged from the study of theory in Chapters Four and Five include:

- Poor quality or non-existent information in terms of Area-based Initiatives.
- The emergence and formalisation of baselining for programmes.
- The difficulty faced by evaluators when the programme objectives are not clearly stated.
- Changes in the basis of programmes over time have been found to frustrate evaluation.
- Conceptual conundrums feature highly.
- The timing of evaluations in relation to the programme itself and any future programmes it is meant to inform.
- The problems associated with the use of indicators to assess performance.
- The increasing engagement of stakeholders.
- Increasing evidence as time progresses that evaluation was intended to be disseminated and used for transfer of learning.



For each programme evaluated an attempt is made to relate the type of evaluation to Aaronovitch's (see Chapter Five) Typology of Evaluations. This is only one of a number of possible typologies, Aaronovitch's typology has been chosen because it combined simplicity with comprehensive coverage of the evolution of evaluation. Policy initiatives have been analysed in the chronological order in which their evaluation is published. This is because the emphasis of this chapter is on analysing the evaluations rather than the operations of the programmes themselves. This has enabled preparation of a time-plan showing the sequence of new programmes and the relationship in time with the evaluations which is shown on Table Fifteen.

This Chapter reports how the review of evaluations over two decades has shown that the process of evaluation has evolved, much in line with the thinking about regeneration generally. However long running issues about data quality, indicators and the proliferation of initiatives remain. This Chapter also reports that this review has found some documented evidence that as a result of evaluation work the transfer of lessons has taken place.

## **6.2 A review of the published evaluations by programme.**

This section documents the findings of the documentary analysis of the key programmes evaluated over the study period and some other holistic evaluations undertaken at that time. This analysis has focussed on whether the process and nature of the evaluations is likely to have facilitated learning rather than the findings of the evaluation.

### **6.2.1 Industrial and Commercial Improvement Areas.**

The evaluation of Industrial and Commercial Improvement Areas (DOE 1993a) was an in-programme evaluation produced by an inter-departmental team. This study evaluates the overall effectiveness of measures implemented under powers of the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978 to declare

local improvement areas. This was an early example of an area-based initiative, based on older Industrial and Commercial Areas.

The study methodology involved three stages. The first was to compile information on all the Industrial Improvement Areas and Commercial Improvement Areas. This was made possible by the requirement for “declaration documents” to be produced at the start of each Improvement Area. However in 1981 this requirement had been abolished and therefore the available information deteriorated. This stage then proceeded to assess the levels of local authority expenditure in 88 Improvement Areas.

Stage Two was composed of case studies which were a mixture of quantitative input/output measures and qualitative work based on interviews and professional descriptions. The programme operators and beneficiaries were interviewed as well as 140 residents. Stage Three was then to compare practice and assess the overall effectiveness of the approach. In doing this three criteria were examined: employment effects; private sector leverage and private sector confidence.

One evaluation issue was that the intervention’s stated objectives were usually economic development but, in practice, grants were given for largely environmental works which only indirectly would give economic development outcomes such as creating jobs. A recommendation is that there was a need for a much more systematic approach to declaring Industrial and Commercial Improvement Areas and then keeping appropriate monitoring information so that evaluation in future would be more effective.



### **6.2.2 Enterprise Zones.**

The Enterprise Zones evaluation was published in 1987 by the DOE (1987) Inner City Research Programme and was undertaken by PA Cambridge Economic Consultants. The programme started in 1980 and was still operating when the evaluation was conducted albeit with some changes which weakened it. This had been a much more tightly focussed experiment than many area-based initiatives both in geographic and in policy terms. The Enterprise Zones offered a range of fiscal incentives and reductions in process requirements such as planning controls and statistical returns in tightly drawn areas around the country.

One of the methodological challenges in their evaluation was that a number of the incentives were watered down as government programmes changed, for example; Development Land Tax was abolished and some of the Industrial Training Board levies were abolished. The techniques used included a survey of firms (760 face to face interviews, 1100 postal questionnaires). Also interviews were conducted with local authority officers and a variety of firms active in the local property market. These could be said to be interviews of potential beneficiaries and key interested players rather than stakeholders generally.

Direct and indirect public costs were determined to establish a cost benefit account type analysis. The evaluation found that the programme was well designed in so far as it “simultaneously encouraged the development of new premises in hitherto derelict or neglected sites and attracted firms into these premises” It also stated that “the experiment has succeeded in attracting private finance capital, from elsewhere in the country, including the City of London, into areas with severe economic development problems” (DOE 1987: 9).

Wider benefits have accrued, than simply those related to net additional jobs, and to players in the property development field. Determining the ultimate beneficiaries of the financial inducements was found to be difficult because of other effects, for example; some landowners had increased rents, thus offsetting some of the intended benefits of the savings on business rates.

A key benefit was the cleaning up of derelict land, attracting further investment, and creating the demonstration effect for the potential of decaying inner-city sites. Enterprise Zones (financial) assistance was found to be more important than any other type of assistance under other government programmes. 88% of firms perceived that exemption from rates was the main benefit. Infrastructure benefits were regarded as critical by 4% of firms and significant by 25% of firms.

Recommendations for monitoring and evaluation emerged; some consideration was given to the need to develop appropriate indicators. One recommendation was the need to set up a system to record components of change which would enable an annual assessment of progress (as had been done in the past by the Department of Trade and Industry). This was an early suggestion of what is now more widely promoted as “theory of change” evaluation. The overall conclusion is that:

Real benefits are being provided to designated zones and their surrounding local economies. The cost effectiveness of the experiment could be improved by reducing the amount of deadweight on both capital allowances and rate relief, which could be differentiated across zones and between economic sectors or even tapered downwards through time (DOE 1987: 88).

Measured against Aaronovitch’s typology the evaluation could be said to be highly confirmatory/legitimising but also intensively audit/target driven. There was a limited pluralist approach as the only stakeholders involved were those who were beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries, or key actors. No



other views were sought, for example, about whether the methods or outcomes were a good thing or not.

### **6.2.3 Garden Festivals.**

The Garden Festivals programme was launched in 1980 following discussions between Ministers and the landscape and horticultural sector. The DOE produced an internal paper entitled “Garden Exhibitions in the United Kingdom” (DOE 1980a) to consider adopting the continental practice into the UK – close to the German model.

The Garden Festivals programme evaluation was post-hoc. It was started after the last Garden Festival and completed in 1990 (DOE 1990b) and was carried out at two levels; a Cost Benefit Analysis based on financial inputs and outputs, and a valuation of the improved landscape based inter alia on professional judgement. There was reference to the end use of the site but no attempt to consider the value of the end use in social or overall regeneration terms. The programme had narrow objectives and the evaluation reflected this.

The evaluation produced an ambivalent report card for the Garden Festivals and did not make recommendations for wider regeneration programmes. An important finding was that there was felt to have been too much (unrealised) reliance on assumptions that Stoke would have learnt from the lessons of the previous (Liverpool) one. This suggests that there was no formal means of ensuring that one festival learnt from the previous one(s). Measured against Aaronovitch’s typology the evaluation could be said to be highly confirmatory/legitimising but also intensively audit/target driven. Professional judgements were used to assess issues such as landscape quality.

#### **6.2.4 Inner City Task Force.**

The Inner City Task Force programme was subject to a post-hoc evaluation for the Department of the Environment by PA Cambridge Economic consultants (DOE 1992a). The programme ran from 1986 to 1992 and the evaluation started at the end of the programme (1991) and was published in 1992. The basic methodological approach was first to use a cost/benefit framework in which gross costs of the public and private sector were established. The gross benefits are then established from “indicators of benefit”. Net costs and benefits are then estimated taking into account displacement and other side effects. To achieve this, the study of projects was enhanced by interviews.

This evaluation is built on the same basis as a previous Inner City Task Force evaluation in 1990 so that the results are comparable but with some case studies of larger projects. The study found that the six intermediate objectives of the Task Forces which are usually referred to as “cross cutting objectives” could not be evaluated in a quantitative way, for example; building up the capacity of local economic development organisations. This was done by studying projects in more details and additional interviews. Lessons for future evaluation were:

- Case study approach is valuable and should be retained.
- Evaluations should have been started 3 months before the Task Forces close.
- Post-hoc monitoring is probably too expensive but one off exercises may be the best way to undertake this.
- More work needs to be done on the concept and measurement of local capacity building (DOE 1992a: x).



Assessed against Aaronovitch's typology this study was therefore both audit/target driven and to a certain extent pluralist/stakeholder in so far as it sought views by interviewing a range of public, private and voluntary beneficiaries but not in so far as it did not seek general views about the programme from those not involved in it.

#### **6.2.5 Assessing the impact of Urban Policy.**

A major piece of evaluation work was completed in 1994 by the Centre for Urban Policy Studies the European Institute for Urban affairs and the University of Durham. Entitled "Assessing the impact of Urban Policy" (DOE 1994a) this was commissioned by the Inner City Research Programme as previous evaluations had been at programme level but it was felt necessary to consider the impact across the whole policy area. This evaluation was post-hoc for some programmes and in-programme for others that were still running.

This study attempts to measure the overall impact of urban policy over the previous decade. The research team identified numerous conceptual and methodological problems with the task: First changes in urban policy over the period make it difficult to characterise a single set of policy aims over the period. They met this difficulty by adopting the four aims of the fifty seven Urban Priority Areas which were the targets of the Action for Cities programme. The conceptual conundrums faced by the review can be summarised as: the counterfactual; the confound; the contextual; the contiguity; the combinatorial and the changing choice problem. The study reports amongst these various difficulties, "that of taking into account the counterfactual argument is by far the most problematic – and ultimately unsolvable" (DOE 1994a: 4-5).

The research methodology was based on three complementary facets: Quantitative or statistical analysis of the socio-economic outcomes against financial inputs in 123 areas (including areas that do not benefit and areas that only marginally benefit from the interventions); qualitative information from surveys of residents and employers; discussions with experts at the sharp end. The significant findings include: the importance of developing coalitions of actors; greater role needed for local authorities, capacity building for communities needed; greater coherence between and within government departments needed with clear strategic objective setting and less ambiguity in targeting of resources.

Both national and local level evaluations were carried out. In examining government objectives against which to evaluate the programme the study found that there were over one hundred. The research team therefore grouped these into high and lower level policy objectives.

A feasibility study was undertaken at the outset to understand how the overall impact of policy could be measured. This served to check that the proposed evaluation would produce defensible results. There were the following strands to this work: How well does Action for Cities represent overall urban policy aims?; defining the urban core; how well are national objectives interpreted on the ground; and the extent to which departments evaluate the success of their own programmes. This last strand dealt with the problem of the “huge variation in data kept” and the problem of unclear objectives and poor flows of information between programmes and sponsor departments. The study found that there was a very mixed picture but that more recent programmes were taking output measures and monitoring procedures more seriously and had better systems in the place from the beginning. The study notes “One promising development is for the preparation at the beginning of a programme’s life, of base line studies, generated through existing data sources and special surveys”.



The study also noticed a serious lack of local evaluation and found the main reasons for this to be: methodological difficulties; organisational priorities; narrowness of remit; volume of operational performance data; lack of baseline information; tenuous links between programme deliverers and the Action for Cities programme; frequency of policy change; emphasis upon strategic information; lack of longitudinal data and lack of independent watchdogs.

Recommendations for future evaluations included;

- Policy ought to consciously incorporate evaluation and assessment;
- Programmes should have to pre-state their aims and proposed effects;
- Base-line information should be prepared;
- Inputs should be monitored regularly on a spatially dis-aggregated basis (DOE 1994a: 441-443).

A national information strategy to which all local information gathering exercises could conform and contribute is discussed. Using Aaronovitch's typology this study, being a very wide ranging evaluation, straddles the three types of evaluation; confirmatory/legitimising in so far as it tries to demonstrate that urban policy has the desired impact; audit/target driven in so far as it attempts at a grand scale to measure net input/output effects and pluralist/stakeholder in so far as that it quite comprehensively engages in interviews and discussions with a wide range of actors and residents.

### **6.2.6 Urban Development Grant**

The evaluation of Urban Development Grant was an in-programme evaluation undertaken for the Department of the Environment Inner City Research Programme by Aston University (DOE 1993b). The evaluation consisted of two elements – an impact assessment and an operational review. The impact assessment was the centre-piece of this evaluation and it was

composed of examination of a sample of sixty five implemented and seventy seven unsuccessful projects in fifteen local authority areas.

The methodology included interviews with developers, local authority officers, and others involved in the process and counting the outputs in terms of: Private investment; jobs; improvements to physical environment and; housing supply and rehabilitation.

According to Aaronovitch's typology this was a confirmatory/legitimising and an audit/target driven evaluation. It cannot be described as pluralist/stakeholder as only those with a direct interest were interviewed – there was no attempt at seeking views from third parties such as the community.

The operational evaluation looked at the processes in the Department of the Environment and in local authorities for promoting the scheme, receiving, handling, and appraising bids and then programme monitoring. A role was identified for a “facilitator” to bring all the parties together and ensure that quality bids were submitted. The quality of many private sector bids was found to be “abysmal”. There is thus a precursor to the later emphasis in programmes on capacity building. Inner city developments are found by the evaluation to be unattractive to nationally based financial institutions.

The study stated: “Unlike the UDAG scheme in the USA there has never been a sufficient number of good proposals to stimulate competitive bidding for Urban Development assistance” (DOE 1988: 16).

The Urban Development Grant programme was found to have been successful in achieving private sector leverage. It seems that the cost per new job compared well with other schemes but it was found to be hard to compare as data and methodology differ between schemes, however only 18% of jobs were filled by previously unemployed people.



A success was that half the sites redeveloped have involved the removal of derelict, vacant, or underused land. There are also positive indications about the quality of building projects and the contribution to the conservation of historic buildings. A strategic regeneration framework to provide the necessary infrastructure and high quality environment was found to be needed to stimulate private sector interest.

The evaluation found that the length of time taken to process applications was seen as a problem. A large number of unsuitable or ineligible applications proceeded too far down the applications path. Funding for feasibility studies in difficult cases was recommended. Project appraisal was found to be good for most projects but very weak in other cases. Forecasts for new jobs were found to bear little or no relation to new jobs actually generated by projects. There was a need for more consistent appraisal, enhancement of appraisal skills was seen as a priority and the evaluation suggests a two tier appraisal system. Clearer guidance on this to local authorities and the private sector was found to be needed. The study also identified a need for more regional demonstration projects to encourage interest and the need to improve measures and methods used to forecast, economic, social and environmental benefits.

Even though there was a considered approach to consulting stakeholders including local community representatives this was an Audit/Target driven exercise as described by Aaronovitch with some movement towards a Pluralist/stakeholder approach.

#### **6.2.7 City Grant.**

An evaluation of the City Grant programme (DOE 1993b) was also released in 1993. This was undertaken for the Inner City Research Programme by Price Waterhouse. This was an in-programme evaluation of City Grant but post-hoc evaluation of its two predecessors: Urban Regeneration Grant and Urban Development Grant.

The evaluation had four objectives:

- Evaluating the success of the grant aided projects in contributing to the wider regeneration of the local area;
- Evaluation of individual projects against their own stated aims;
- Identification of success factors;
- Recommendations for the present programme and future policy.

The object of City Grant was (DOE 1993b: 5) “to assist private sector development projects in the 57 inner city areas which would otherwise be unable to proceed because project costs exceed completed development value”. Five types of impact were measured: Property market, economic, environmental, social and community and value for money. This evaluation did not aim to evaluate the impact of the programme as a whole, nor was it concerned with the way the programme operated. These matters had been covered by separate research into Urban Development Grant by Aston University. The evaluation was conducted in two phases and the second phase was amended to include: the extent to which grant-aided schemes induced development in neighbouring areas, property market displacement, job creation, and land values.

The methodology was to conduct thirty six in-depth studies into sample projects carefully chosen against selection criteria. For each study the following was undertaken:

- Desk study of case files and background data on the local economy and property market.
- Interviews with the developer, the Department of the Environment, and the local authority.
- Survey of occupants of the scheme.
- Discussion with estate agents.
- Site visit.
- Consultation with local community representatives (DOE 1993b: 6).



For all these activities explanatory notes are given except about how community consultation was carried out. The evaluation of social and community impact was complicated by changes in the guidance. Originally the Urban Development Grant regime specifically stated that projects should make a demonstrable contribution to meeting the “special social needs of inner urban areas”. When City Grant replaced this regime there was no such requirement though this was subsequently stated in revised guidance.

Economic impact was evaluated on the single measure of net additional job creation. Environmental impact was assessed on the basis of indicators derived and then professional visits (as in the Garden Festivals evaluation (DOE 1990b)). A weakness is that the final value for money calculation was based on calculating cost per net additional job created and the public/private gearing ratio. No account being taken of the other benefits such as social and community. The study found that there were significant environmental and social benefits to communities but that these were not explicitly taken into account in appraisals – making it hard to consistently evaluate the performance of projects. The evaluation produced a range of policy recommendations. Of particular note was the need for more clearly specified targets “which would make the evaluation process more precise”. It was also felt that it would be useful if the department made clear that it was looking at a matrix or balanced scorecard of targets met rather than every target met by every project.

### **6.2.8 Urban Development Corporations.**

The Urban Development Corporations were another tightly drawn area-based initiative but with a facilitating and driving body to see through the regeneration. Imrie and Thomas researched the evaluation of Urban Development Corporations and state that:

There is a paucity of published evaluations of the performances of the Urban Development Corporations. What exists is a range of disparate writings, some government commissioned as well as academic research

with the focus often on single cases or specific aspects of Urban Development Corporations' operation... the overall effect then is partial and limited in coverage with fragmented insights into the operations, practices and policy effects of the Urban Development Corporations (Imrie and Thomas 1999: 24).

Imrie and Thomas point out three principal omissions in the Urban Development Corporations evaluations: Institutional dynamic of Urban Development Corporations' policy formulation; links between Urban Development Corporations and other organisations and the distributive costs of Urban Development Corporations' policy. They go on to state that the Department of Environment Transport and the Region's research on Urban Development Corporations (DETR 1997) has always been narrowly based on "bricks and mortar" type criteria. They cite many commentators who have been very unhappy with the use of such narrow quantifiable measures whose main purpose was to justify the programmes as having some "demonstrable return" for the public purse.

Other commentators, for example; McAllister (1980: 277-278) called for a subjective element to be introduced based on local feelings of those affected. Imrie (1996: 1445 – 1464) called for communities to be involved in the design and operation of evaluations. As Turok (1991: 1543 -50) notes these concerns are driven by the inability of standard criteria measures to properly reflect the varying needs and opinions of diverse groups. Brownill *et al* (1997) argued that it was the nature of Urban Development Corporations as "can do" organisations that get things done rather than evaluating impacts that led to this poor approach to evaluation but Robson *et al* (DOE 1994a) highlighted that evaluation was not a priority throughout urban policy generally.

The National Audit Office (1993) did evaluate the second and third generations of the Urban Development Corporations but found it difficult to establish the strength of each Urban Development Corporation's performance and value for money because of the definitions of performance



measures, the achievability of targets, and the reliability of output data. A serious problem was found to be the lack of any local and independent element of monitoring and evaluation (DOE 1994a).

One independent evaluation (or critique) was undertaken by the Docklands Consultative Committee. The Committee was critical of the way that the London Docklands Development Corporation's impact was to be measured: "for the Government and the corporation the economic impact was to be measured in solely in financial and physical terms" (DCC 1990: 22). They found that the Government was happy to simply assert that substantial private investment should lead to higher employment - indeed the National Audit Office found that there had been little systematic evaluation of the Urban Development Corporations (NAO 1988).

The Docklands Consultative Committee (DCC 1990: 22) also pointed out that the All Party House of Commons Employment Committee (House of Commons 1988) had rejected this approach and recommended that a proper remit should be given to the London Docklands Development Corporation including wider objectives including local community objectives and benefits to adjoining areas. The Docklands Consultative Committee found that the failure to publish detailed up to date labour market information meant that the London Docklands Development Corporation could not be properly monitored and evaluated. In addition, survey results were not released until after they had any chance of being useful in programme evaluation. They stated that the London Docklands Development Corporation's own consultants Peat Marwick, McClintock found a lack of clear policies and objectives against which initiatives could be evaluated and inadequate information systems. The London Docklands Development Corporation according to Docklands Consultative Committee "has no indicators of what it is trying to achieve with the money and consistently refuses to set any despite pressure from the Employment Committee of the House of Commons" (DCC 1990: 66). It was not possible to apply Aaronovitch's typology to this as there was no single evaluation report.

### **6.2.9 City Challenge.**

The City Challenge programme was one of the turning points in urban policy. The Government (DOE 1992a) claimed that the stimulus of competition driven by highly prescriptive bidding guidance would transform the way local authorities and their partners approach the task of urban regeneration. In evaluation terms it started a trend of having an interim evaluation and a final evaluation.

In 1991 the Secretary of State, Michael Heseltine) announced a new approach to urban regeneration at Manchester Chamber of Commerce which he envisaged as having:

- Emphasis on competition as a catalyst for unleashing local creativity.
- Schemes showing enterprise and vision would be rewarded.
- Resources shifted to opportunity and incentive.
- Resources concentrated on a smaller number of larger projects.
- Reward plans that showed need and opportunity and had the imagination to link two.
- Partnerships essential “combining the Victorian sense of competitive drive linked to social obligation”.
- New emphasis on community involvement (Oatley 1998: 111).

The move was away from “top-down” appointed corporations which could bypass local democratic processes (including planning controls) and did not structurally involve communities towards a “challenge” approach. In the new approach localities themselves developed partnerships, identified priorities and proposed solutions. City Challenge was therefore different from previous regimes as it was: competitive; targeted (on a small area); comprehensive; partnership-based; output driven; and time limited. It also had significant delegation; significant resources (£37.5m per area); sustainable regeneration; delivery and involvement structures and an annual review and action plans (DETR 2000a: 27-28).



Oatley and Lambert's analysis of the move to City Challenge includes many products from evaluation results, but not learning. They include the "...demise of Thatcher, economic recession, sustained property recession, failure of Canary Wharf – raising question-mark over property-led regeneration, rising tide of criticism from professional bodies and burden of bureaucracy" among their reasons (Oatley and Lambert 1998: 109-115).

Fearnley and Pratt (1996: 331-351) draw similarities between Heseltine's speech (in 1991) and Peter Shore's speech (in 1977) when he launched the Inner City Partnerships. They also highlight that City Challenge introduced the idea of independent evaluation and national scheme level evaluation. Evaluation of effective partnership working was introduced and the problems found with evaluation included the small area and boundary issues. They also found that:

The evaluation of Stratford City Challenge has shown that impacts are likely to take some time to be visible, often beyond the timescale of the project. This means that not only is it difficult to learn from the City Challenge experiment, but also it diverts attention from the longer term, qualitative and potentially more valuable goals..... it raises the possibility that what gets done is what is possible within the constraints of the programme – not what is needed by the area and its people  
Fearnley and Pratt (1996: 331-351).

The evaluation team for Stratford also noted the potential for clashes between the entrepreneurial approach of City Challenge and the local authority procedures. One of the main lessons was that the imposition of new mechanisms for regeneration cannot be done in isolation from the continuing process of governance of the area. Whether the lessons were learnt is in doubt as after just two and a half years of the City Challenge programme the Single Regeneration Budget was announced. As Fearnley and Pratt (1996: 327-351) state "the arrival of Single Regeneration Budget and the death of City Challenge mean that lessons from these evaluations cannot be taken on

board". However, the new programme was seen as a turning point. Lawless stated that "City Challenge can be seen as a prototype to test ideas of competition for funding urban regeneration undertaken by multi-sector partnerships in the context of a contractual model or urban policy" (Lawless 1996: 27).

Oatley's analysis was that "City Challenge was a mechanism to alter both the substantive aims of urban policy and the processes of policy formulation and delivery". This competitive paradigm has since come to dominate British public policy, in relation to specific funding and beyond (Oatley 1998: 109). The interim City Challenge evaluation found that it had: "Galvanised effective local partnerships; fostered a strategic approach; made genuine attempts at integration across policy areas and; had achieved genuine added value from working together" (DOE 1996a: 181).

Oatley did find some alarming signs (Oatley 1998: 207) citing recent research on City Challenge projects which found that spending priorities had been distorted away from basic needs and towards 'flavour of the month' type projects.

The Final Evaluation of City Challenge was conducted for the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions by KPMG (DETR 2000a). The evaluation methodology combined "bottom up" and "top down" approaches: The search for "bottom up" partnership and project impacts involved detailed project level analysis including surveys of beneficiaries. The overall impact was obtained by grossing up project level results. "Top down" programme and secondary indicators looked at changes in aggregate indicators and sought to determine the extent to which changes in these indicators could be attributable to the activities of partnerships.

The process included detailed interviews with partnership executive team members, Government Office of the Region staff and partners. In all thirty one partnerships quite intensive evaluation techniques were used, including: "What works?" consultations, these were face to face interviews with



partners. This work contributed to regeneration policy development following the Comprehensive Spending Review and a review of local partnerships' baseline materials and evaluations. Partnership and project output and expenditure monitoring data were prepared for project categories, for example; housing and partnership case studies were selected (using criteria) calculated to ensure that the research questions were addressed and in each area the following took place:

- Chief Executive discussions were held.
- Partner's consultations were held with two or three partners each area.
- Resident voluntary and community focus groups.
- 4800 face to face resident surveys, 400 telephone interviews with businesses and twenty two property agent's surveys were conducted (DETR 2000a 196: 203).

In addition 16 project case studies were chosen and 219 programme and project manager interviews and 1500 telephone and face to face surveys of "project beneficiaries". This included questions such as how well a project was delivered and managed; what were its impacts on those it was intended to benefit and whether any benefits would be long lasting. Unsuccessful areas were also surveyed. The baseline studies and evaluation reports produced by partnerships produced some significant gaps and inconsistencies – new information had to be constructed by the survey team. The lack of up to date data at a fine enough level was a problem. Collection of primary data was important though often expensive. In some areas both factual and opinion surveys were conducted.

The study team found that there was an almost universal emphasis on the need to focus on outcomes and not outputs. The outputs did not say who the beneficiaries were and programmes felt that they needed to replace project outputs when a project fell through with a new project with the same outputs. The study team found that: "Outputs measures can also easily be manipulated". The issues over outputs included: definitions, accounting

through time, measuring outputs and double counting. 20% of programme managers said they had encountered difficulties with outputs. This is of concern considering that outputs were central to evaluating the programme.

Value for Money impacts were assessed as primary, secondary, tertiary and wider using a combination of cost benefit accounting and Value for Money appraisal. The additionality appraisal includes consideration of leakage, deadweight, displacement, multiplier effects. Value for Money was composed of effectiveness, efficiency, and economy. The overall economic and social impact of the programme is presented in a cost benefit account. There were methodological issues related to assessing cost-effectiveness when there are multiple outputs, four alternative approaches were adopted:

- An assessment at project level using a matrix of costs, outcomes, and outputs by project type.
- An aggregate measure of cost-effectiveness (basket of benefits approach).
- Weighted cost-effectiveness.
- Benchmark “regeneration cost” assessment (DETR 2000a: 236-249).

The study found that the enormous diversity of local evaluations meant that there was insufficient consistency to make meaningful comparisons across all areas. However it concluded with a positive view regarding learning:

City Challenge was a ground breaking and very successful programme, which has provided the basis for a step change in regeneration policy. Many of its features have been incorporated into subsequent regeneration and area-based programmes. It provides important lessons for current and future regeneration activity (DETR 2000a: 17).



Compared to the Aaronovitch typology this evaluation was: High confirmatory/legitimising and audit/target driven but was also pluralist/stakeholder to the extent that community and voluntary sector people involved in the City Challenge were interviewed. This research makes explicit “lessons for policy”;

- The need for a clear local strategy linking problems to solutions.
- Recognition that the City Challenge is short timescale and some areas will take 10-15 years to improve.
- Need for high calibre staff who stay with the programme.
- Partnership working was successful but there is a need for time to be invested in building up trust and greater integration, for example; of budgets.
- Co-relation between poor performers and poor community involvement – need time spent on capacity building also to ensure that projects are improvements are sustained.
- Need for sustainable exits strategies for projects and consideration of ongoing revenue streams etc.
- Considerable time needs to be invested to get monitoring and evaluation right from the start (DETR 2000a: 185-193).

#### **6.2.10 Single Regeneration Budget.**

The Single Regeneration Budget was introduced while City Challenge was still operating and it posed many evaluation challenges. The Department of Land Economy at University of Cambridge had the task of conducting the interim (in-programme) evaluation (DETR 1998). The team regarded the Single Regeneration Budget as requiring the most complex evaluation yet: “Single Regeneration Budget seems to be top of the list of difficult programmes to evaluate”. Some problems highlighted include: the sheer breadth of benefits - both relatively poor measures of benefits that do arise and problems of bringing them together into a basket; problems of measuring national gain from such a local-centric programme and measurement of

benefits of partnership approach (DETR 1998: 64-65). They concluded that there was a need use the standard approach as in 'EGRUP' guidelines (HM Treasury 1995) to arrive at a cost benefit account for the measure but evaluation should also include:

- Ability of programme to improve the workings of the market.
- Mainstream service delivery.
- Functioning of voluntary and community sector.
- Underlying rationale for the measure.
- Measures for Single Regeneration Budget benefits, for example; job-streams over 7/8 years (DETR 1998: 64-65).

The team also identified the need for a broader measure of additionality since the nature of many Single Regeneration Budget projects is such that the beneficial effects of interventions could be very wide ranging. Another recurring difficulty was that of achieving appropriate areas for measurements. For example displacement in the 'EGRUP' model is based on Travel to Work Areas but this did not seem appropriate to the evaluation team for Single Regeneration Budget's very local programmes. There could be many quite different Single Regeneration Budget programmes within one travel to work area.

The key difference found by the team is that the scope of the Single Regeneration Budget is much wider than previous urban and regional policy mechanisms so they were seeking to find out if there are genuine area effects from delivering services, concentrating resources and stimulating partnerships in this way. The team was also keen to identify, or at least get nearer to, "totals as well as margins" for example; with jobs outputs there is a need to consider any effects on the unemployment rates in the area or a culture change manifested in staying on rates or an attitudinal change among employers or job-seekers etc. Thus it is the overall effect that is sought, if possible.



Another area receiving special attention was that of ethnic minorities. Not only would the success of getting black and ethnic minorities involved as users be measured but also their engagement as partners. It was also felt important to study whether things are more or less polarised at the end in terms on ethnic minority involvement. Direct interviews with black and ethnic minority leaders were included in the evaluation. Also community involvement was seen as a major element of the evaluation.

There were a number of methodological issues around the costs, for example; discounting and recognising income. The evaluation sought to achieve a much more sophisticated set of performance measures. The team stated “It will be important for measures to be developed for the level of private sector and voluntary effort leverage.” This was recognising an increasing move to count that which had not previously been counted, in particular the time put in by people on community projects. This is in addition to the move to increase qualitative evaluation; it may be seen as measuring stakeholder contributions in addition to having stakeholder involvement.

One of the most significant developments in the Single Regeneration Budget evaluation was the proposal that “baselines should include a measure or qualitative judgement of institutional capacity and how well social exclusion is tackled”. This is informed by the increasing awareness that for areas to be successful there needs to be “institutional thickness” (Amin and Thrift 1995: 91-108) and for regeneration projects to be sustainable there needs to be the capacity on the ground. This is linked to the identified need for measures of durability of outcomes. One of the learning issues for this evaluation was that the interim evaluation of City Challenge had shown the importance of Community Forums. The evaluation team was keen to see how far good practice has permeated the Single Regeneration Budget.

On Aaronovitch’s typology this was confirmatory/ legitimising, audit driven and also pluralist/stakeholder. Even though it touches on some of the issues of democratic evaluation such as the involvement and capacity building of

local groups it does not structurally set out to extend democracy, increase social justice and build up social capital as envisaged by Aaronovitch.

A discussion paper for the Department of the Environment on the National Single Regeneration Budget evaluation sets out the fundamental challenge for contemporary evaluations. Hitherto evaluation methodology had largely concentrated on an analysis of gross and net additional project and scheme outputs but this has the area limitation of “measurement of overall regeneration outcomes or changes in outcomes in a neighbourhood”. There is a need to measure more “downstream” benefits. (Tyler 2002b: 166).

This evaluation brought together traditional output based evaluation with outcome evidence obtained from local area surveying. It has also placed much greater importance on establishing base-lines which can measure both the direct effect of outputs and the cumulative and holistic benefits of activities. As there are hundreds of Single Regeneration Budget schemes it was very important to ensure that the baselines were consistent but the evaluation team found that they were not. They found that “there is no alternative but to undertake social surveys that are the subject of multi-faceted regeneration policies if the key impacts on the required outcomes are to be assessed” (DETR: 1998: 76).

The Single Regeneration Budget evaluation thus has introduced the need for large scale surveys as the only way of really knowing what changes are happening in the area. However surveys were also perceived to have their limitations including; the number of movers into and out of an area and the fact that in any area the panel, once selected, ages with time so their characteristics change anyway.



### **6.2.11 The regeneration of former coalfield areas.**

This theme was evaluated by SQW/BBP partnership (DETR 2000c). It can be regarded as an in-programme evaluation as many of the initiatives investigated were still operational. This study had three main aims: Baselineing; interim effectiveness and cost effectiveness and; drawing out transferable lessons. The key findings were that:

Regeneration activities were generally less effective and cost-effective when compared with the benchmarks drawn from evaluations of similar activities elsewhere. Monitoring and evaluation of regeneration activities needed to be conducted more frequently and systematically in ways that went beyond project management and engaged local businesses and people in the process (DETR 2000c: 1).

They also found that regeneration project development and appraisal (and the setting of targets) needed to be better informed by feasibility and demand studies and by cumulative evidence of evaluation studies. They found that there appeared to be little awareness of the availability or relevance of existing evaluation evidence with respect to what might be realistic, but testing targets, and that little attention appeared to have been devoted to the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the different forms of intervention (other than in a limited audit sense).

Evaluating outcomes through the greater use of resident and business panels to redefine objectives and tasks as appropriate is recommended. Using Aaronovitch's typology this evaluation was not confirmatory/legitimising as it was, in a sense, exploratory it was audit/target driven in so far as it was comparing performance against non-coalfield regions and it was pluralist in so far as it took into account the views of different actors. It could be said to be verging on democratic evaluation from the point of view that it was arguing the case for targeted empowerment.

### **6.2.12 New Commitment to Regeneration.**

An evaluation of progress with the New Commitment to Regeneration was undertaken by the Audit Commission (2002). The objectives (stated purposes) of the evaluation were to inform discussion among key decision-makers, identify barriers to change and strategies that have overcome these barriers in the delivery of the Government's New Commitment to Regeneration. The evaluation methods used and the operational components were largely based on desk review, a telephone survey, and interviews of Local Strategic Partnership key players. The stakeholder involvement was found to rely on the views of those "in power" on Local Strategic Partnerships and does not seek the views of the community (other than those on the Local Strategic Partnerships) or wider population. However for the future Local Strategic Partnerships will be required to have community representation. On the Aaronovitch typology it is between Audit/target driven and Pluralist/stakeholder type evaluations.

The timing of evaluation (2002) was in-programme (early stages) and the methodology was an interview based study to assess how Local Strategic Partnerships are gearing up for implementing the New Commitment to Renewal and identifying barriers and inconsistencies in the Government's approach. Lessons for policy/recommendations included:

- The Government needs to re-affirm its commitment to reducing the gap between the worst areas and their comparators.
- Ensure a corporate approach to Neighbourhood Renewal is taken across government.
- Neighbourhood based targets should be introduced.
- Local Public Service Agreements need to have targets which close the gap.
- Need to have clear justifications for any further area-based initiatives and reduce the number of them.



- Should have differentiated approach to support offered to Local Strategic Partnerships.
- Do not rely solely on Local Strategic Partnerships in short term.
- Actions for locals service providers to consider (Audit Commission 2002).

The report explains that the arrangement for feedback to the programme and other stakeholders was that the report was sent straight to all Local Strategic Partnerships and is available to all at [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net). The report also states that the New Commitment to Regeneration was based on the lessons from previous programmes, in particular those that were learnt through the Policy Action Teams. An earlier evaluation of the New Commitment to Regeneration was undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Research Foundation and it is intended to feed into Local Strategic Partnerships this being a rare example (discovered by this research) of an evaluation tailored directly into feeding lessons into a successor initiative. There were mainly process lessons due to the early stage of development:

- Building a partnership with trust takes time.
- Leadership is crucial.
- Membership must be the right breadth for the purpose but not more.
- An executive team adequately resourced is essential.
- After two years most, if not all, Local Strategic Partnerships were in transition from action planning to delivery.
- There was still resistance to bending mainstream budgets and at national level to give flexibilities (Russell 2001: vii-ix)

The study then suggested key tasks facing Local Strategic Partnerships under the following headings: Developing their vision and strategy, achieving whole systems change, engaging private sector partners, developing community involvement strategies, measuring the partnership's added value, accountability mechanisms, and central-local partnership. This was a

combined pluralist/stakeholder with democratic evaluation as it was directly related to process issues for making sure that joint empowerment works.

#### **6.2.13 Towards an Urban Renaissance.**

The findings from the Urban Task Force (Urban Task Force 1999) are based on a more wide ranging exercise than an evaluation but nevertheless feed in some important issues to the debate. The Task Force discovered inherent weaknesses in the way that monitoring and evaluation of regeneration projects is done:

- Lack of transparency leading to little confidence that the data has been calculated on a consistent basis;
- Reliance on outputs rather than outcomes;
- Over-reliance on national, rather than local, indicators;
- Over emphasis on ex-ante estimates of potential project outputs to satisfy Treasury economic appraisal model leading to over-reporting of actual outputs;
- Double counting between organisations.

Their key recommendations were important and reflect findings of previous evaluations: the need for “cradle to grave” evaluations including a considerable period at the end and the need to develop locally defined indicators (Urban Task Force 1999: 290).

#### **6.2.14 Urban Regeneration Companies.**

Urban Regeneration Companies have been emerging as a policy instrument for specially selected cities which have intractable problems preventing the bringing forward of schemes and which have clear development potential. In so far as they are emerging over time (albeit centrally approved) and they are facilitative companies rather than substitute authorities some of the lessons



from the Urban Development Corporations may have been learnt. The Department for Transport Local Government and the Regions undertook a consultation on proposals to evaluate the Urban Regeneration Companies. They suggest that any monitoring and evaluation framework developed for Urban Regeneration Companies would learn from the City Challenge experience where local evaluations had been lacking in consistency and comparability. Each Urban Regeneration Company should establish a monitoring framework with common indicators.

The recommended approach to monitoring and evaluating the URCs is one that combines and balances local and national level inputs. The URCs would undertake local monitoring, performance management and, where appropriate, evaluations, which would guide them in their work and supplement and inform the national evaluation. A national evaluation should be commissioned by DTLR, with significant inputs from EP. Nationally, the evaluation would be action research based with regular feedback to Urban Regeneration Company (DTLR 2001: 5).

This is important as programmes such as Sure Start are conducting their national evaluation without feeding back to local programmes until the end. There would also be surveys including stakeholder evaluations (this is following the Single Regeneration Budget finding that baseline and subsequent quantitative and qualitative surveys are essential). The evaluation framework is based on the approach outlined by the European Union and it shows clear learning and development from previous programmes, in particular, the explicit emphasis on learning and passing on lessons. This shows much more of a learning culture in evaluation with the frank acceptance that some things will go well and others may not. There will be a 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approach similar to the City Challenge evaluation. This is now the norm for evaluation. The evaluation will be conducted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (which was then Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions) but with significant input from English partnerships in their role in relation to good

practice. These proposals signify a move towards Aaronovitch's more pluralist and democratic types.

#### **6.2.15 Review of Area-based initiatives.**

A two year research project into Area-based Initiatives was commissioned by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and the Regional Co-ordination Unit (NRU 2002c: 21). This was both in-programme and post-hoc research, as some of the programmes were still running. Alarming, given the 30 years experience of evaluation in the United Kingdom, this study has found that evaluation "remains a secondary activity, subordinate to the more immediate tasks of programme and project delivery" A number of barriers to greater co-ordination of evaluation are identified:

- Varying spatial bases.
- Different agendas, interests, and focuses.
- Different baselines.
- Problems of sharing information (sometimes due to competition).
- Problems around exit strategies with no area-based initiative willing to admit failure.
- They found that "National studies give little attention to user or community evaluation and yet clearly definitions of success differ depending on the standpoint of the observer."

Positive signs were:

- There were some examples of collaborative work in evaluation, for example; between Single Regeneration Budget and Health Action Zone.
- At both national and local levels evaluations are beginning to include new methods which incorporate theories of change – representing multiple interests.
- There is more interest in how strategic partnerships can develop indicators towards shared objectives (NRU 2002c: 22).



A key recommendation of the research is that the Government should invest in transfer of learning from Area-based Initiatives to the mainstream. This study shows that despite the obvious evolution of regeneration as outlined in this paper much remains to be done. They were also particularly concerned about a failure of decision-makers to recognise that not everything works and hence to accept criticism. This point is echoed in the stakeholder research undertaken for this thesis and reported in Chapter Seven. How can valuable lessons be learnt if the key players think that everything has to be portrayed as a success?

#### **6.2.16 New Deal for Communities.**

The New Deal for Communities programme is a highly targeted area-based initiative concentrating on small areas of only around 4000 households, that is; a large housing estate or group of smaller estates and streets. The key principles of the New Deal for Communities are to achieve strategic transformation through: Community involvement and ownership; a learning programme with action based on evidence about 'what works' and what doesn't; long term commitment to deliver real change; creating dedicated agencies for neighbourhood renewal with communities at the heart, in partnership with key agencies (NRU 2005: 9).

It is therefore important to scrutinise the evaluation proposals for the current round of urban policy initiatives. The New Deal for Communities is the key programme in the Government's strategy to tackle deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. It forms part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal which is being delivered through the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit at the Department for Transport, Local Government, and the Regions. Over £1.9 billion has been committed to 39 New Deal for Communities Partnerships, to be spent over a ten year period

on tackling issues in five key areas: unemployment and worklessness; health; education; crime and community safety; and housing and the environment.

A consortium of research organisations has secured the contract from the Department of Transport, Local Government, and the Regions to undertake the national evaluation of the New Deal for Communities regeneration programme. The consortium is led by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University with a team of seventeen universities and consultancies with expertise in the evaluation of neighbourhood renewal programmes. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact, effectiveness, and value for money of the New Deal for Communities programme, contribute advice to local partnerships on implementation, and develop the evidence base for future local regeneration policy. There will be five work strands as the evaluation develops:

- Central desk work on data;
- Working with New Deal for Communities partnerships on local context and local partnership analysis including interviews with an annual report and targeted feedback;
- Policy theme teams including case studies;
- Dissemination and publicity;
- Case study work (NRU 2002a: 12-14).

The evaluation will be balanced between data and evidential approaches with strong emphasis on the stakeholder approach. This will be a Pluralist/Stakeholder evaluation with elements of Democratic evaluation according to the Aaronovitch typology. The first phase was a scoping evaluation (NRU 2003b). This study examines the extent to which the New Deal for Communities programmes were becoming established and the difficulties and achievements to date. This is largely based on interviewing those involved and examining key documents. It has written down some of



the widespread difficulties that New Deal for Communities partnerships have had in operationalising the programme's quite far reaching and possibly conflicting objectives of being bottom up but achieving top-down targets and spend. The study found:

- A strong commitment at the local level to community involvement and empowerment.
- A strong commitment from some partners and partnership arrangements settling down in some areas.
- A growing range of projects up and running.
- It was hard to get effective community involvement simultaneously with strategic planning.
- That it was difficult to get effective mainstreaming (NRU 2002a: 12).

The arrangement for feedback to the programme and other stakeholders is that the draft has been shared with New Deal for Communities programmes. A series of papers on "what works" have been sent to all New Deal for Communities programmes based on experience of regeneration programmes to date. Also the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has produced and made available the Knowledge Management System. Evaluation and review is built into the New Deal for Communities programme both at partnership level and nationally. Each year each partnership takes part in an informal mid year progress review in November. This is followed in February by a more formal annual review with the Government Office and the New Deal for Communities Unit, at which annual outcomes are measured against the targets set out in the Delivery Plan. At Years Three and Six, partnerships undergo a more thorough review of progress by revisiting and re-assessing their baseline data and floor targets. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is keen to make partnerships realise that they are not on their own. The first national evaluation report states that:

An extensive system of support and advice is made available to the partnerships. As well as regularly updated guidance documents, regionally organised seminars, and training events are also provided. Partnerships are encouraged to build regional networks of support and advice with New Deal for Communities and other partnerships and establish local learning programmes to build capacity in New Deal for Communities neighbourhoods” (NRU 2002a: 15).

Learning has become established as a way of working and not just a part of evaluation and review. The Department of Environment Transport and the Region’s guidance on evaluation for the New Deal for Communities programme distinguishes between evaluation and monitoring:

Evaluation is vital to assess and improve the impact of your strategy. It differs from monitoring in that it looks critically at what has been achieved as a result of the New Deal for Communities and also at why things went well or badly. It must be an integral part of both scheme and project management (DETR 2000b: 6).

The guidance emphasises the need to evaluate both how successful individual projects were in making an impact and how well the scheme as a whole is doing. The guidance also emphasis the need for racial equality monitoring and also uses the broader term of “those who usually face social exclusion”. The guidance defines the matters which evaluation should include:

Relevance - of the project/scheme to what you are trying to do;  
feasibility - did design and implementation go well? Did the project/scheme achieve its goals? Sustainability - are the benefits being maintained? (DETR 2000b: 13).

Sustainability is a term now commonly used in evaluation that was little used in the earlier schemes examined for this research, for example; Enterprise Zones (see above, this Chapter).



There is a somewhat surprising statement that “Project evaluation will happen at the end of the project.” This message is confused when considered alongside the scheme evaluation requirements in the same document:

Critical evaluations of your scheme as a whole and the contribution of individual projects must be carried out at the end of year 3, year 6 and the end of scheme (DTER 2000b: 13).

As each partnership is required to undertake mid-year and annual reviews these statements could highlight two purposes of evaluation: The need to evaluate projects that are producing interesting results (or perhaps not producing results) as the programme develops and the need to check how projects have performed once they have come to an end. This dilemma highlights that even in the most recent programme (New Deal for Communities) there is the possibility of lessons from projects being learned too late to feed back into the programme. Emphasis is put on measuring the baseline and there is an acceptance, despite the criticism in the Policy Action Team 18 report, that this:

Will therefore include repeating the same residents' surveys and collecting up to date data from existing data sources (such as unemployment data) to examine the changes from the original. Evaluations will also use the data that has been collected through regular project monitoring linked to changes in the area, to assess what changes New Deal for Communities is bringing about (SEU 2000: 5).

There is the now standard requirement for New Deal for Communities programmes that they must undertake local evaluation by an independent person or institution. Overall, evaluations should be consistent with Treasury guidelines on evaluations. The current guidance is HM Treasury (1995) ‘A framework for evaluations of regeneration projects and programmes’. The national evaluation has as a key aspect: ‘action research’. This aims to provide useful feedback to the partnerships, and others, within the lifetime of

their schemes. For this to happen, the guidance states, it is essential that the main evaluation is a genuine partnership between all those who have an interest in the success of the programme.

Assessed against Aaronovitch's typology this proposal is pluralist/stakeholder and comes closest to a democratic evaluation in so far as that the New Deal for Communities programme is community led and there should be scope for those most affected to use the evaluation as an empowering force to enable them to better control the way the programme is run and hold to account the various players. It should also mean that the communities learn from the process and become better able to manage regeneration in their areas as a result. There may, however, be the barrier of the need to stick to agreed spending programmes and respond to in-programme crises.

For the first time this programme provides National Evaluation Reports on subjects such as "What works in neighbourhood renewal - Reviews of the evidence base" these are published on the following topics: crime; education; health; housing and physical environment and worklessness and are all freely available on the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit web-site: ([www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp](http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp) ). There is thus an acceptance at the beginning that there are a range of possible approaches to each issue and that these are contested. This is a considerable move from the earlier approach of challenging localities to identify problems, arrive at solutions and then produced detailed quarterly plans showing how the issues against which they would be judged will be addressed. Sheffield Hallam University is leading the New Deal for Communities evaluation with a team of seventeen universities and consultancies working across all thirty-nine programmes. Evidence of learning transfer taking place has also been documented by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in its own Annual Report which found that in Bradford "The NDC has proved to be a genuine Pathfinder inspiring change in service delivery across the City. NDC staff are on the Steering Group designing the strategy for neighbourhood action planning across Bradford" (NRU 2002b: 48).



### **6.2.17 Housing Action Trusts.**

The Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria (DETR 2000d) undertook an in-programme evaluation of the Housing Action Trust programme. This was another example of an evaluation designed explicitly to disseminate lessons and good practice. Indeed it was entitled “Transferable Lessons from Housing Action Trusts”. This evaluation was designed to lead directly to recommendations for practice within and outside the Housing Action Trust programme. The Department of Environment Transport and the Regions set research questions and the methodology adopted was to use existing collected qualitative and quantitative data enhanced by over eighty interviews with partners, officers and others involved. Workshops were also held with residents in each Housing Action Trust area studied. Technical problems faced included the difficulty of separating out the effects of multiple initiatives, in response to this; much of the substantive research was undertaken on the basis of the interviews and focus group work. The research team felt it was an important evaluation because it could focus on how holistic area-based regeneration evolves and performs.

The evaluation was informed by the publication “A life’s Work” (Audit Commission 1999) which suggests that in addition to housing outputs the transformation of the programme area should be considered. It was also informed by the work of Parkinson and Newburn (1998) “A framework for evaluation of the New Commitment to Regeneration Pathfinder areas” that suggested that as well as benchmarking the cost of policy options, evaluations should look for improvements of process in decision-making in the lifetime of an initiative.

The study found that “inconsistencies in performance measurement data amongst the individual Housing Action Trusts are evident with implications for effective evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation framework within which the Housing Action Trusts has operated has developed incrementally”. The research team found that as Housing Action Trusts had their origins in

an earlier phase of regeneration they predated the more recent emphasis on establishing both baseline data and meaningful and consistent performance indicators at the outset of the programme. They cite two key lessons on programme evaluation, firstly the development of indicators that are meaningful to all concerned and secondly the importance of resident survey work to capture the less quantitative information. On the question of transfer of learning the team found that:

There are several important caveats to the transferability of the good practice lessons. First, the HATs have had access to substantial financial resources which have been vital in enabling the HATs to physically regenerate their estates with the aim of stabilising their communities and creating conditions for long term sustainability. Second, local conditions in terms of the community, the economy, and external factors relating to the particular policy context mean that every area-based programme will have a different set of resources to work with. Finally, the mechanisms which have created disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in the first place, may constrain what can be achieved by local partners (DETR 2000d: 2).

This was clearly a combined audit/target driven and stakeholder based evaluation according to Aaronovitch's typology.

### **6.3 Findings from the study of documented evaluations.**

One of the key issues is the quality of information. A recurring theme is that both evaluations and associated theory report problems in terms of Area-based Initiatives (for example; Tyler 2002a). There have been conflicting views over the years ranging from it being considered sufficient to monitor changes over the whole urban area to the, now prevailing, view that local area (sub-ward level) statistics are needed and special surveys as well. In 2004 this has been refined to "Super-Output Areas".



A clear trend over time has been the emergence and formalisation of baselining for programmes. This has developed from being in many cases non-existent through a phase in which base-lines were primarily quantitative to the present situation where base-lines represent a compendium of existing and new information with specially commissioned large scale surveys which include attitudinal information as well quantifiable measures. Another theme emerging from this study is the difficulty faced by evaluators when the programme objectives are not clearly stated or when they are clearly stated but, in fact, actions are really being done for a quite different reason.

It would seem very important that, if regeneration programmes are to be intensively evaluated, that the evaluation is actually used to impact on and improve policy. The background to this current research is the apparent lack of comprehensive written evidence that evaluation lessons have been passed on as new regeneration programmes emerge.

Changes in the basis of programmes over time have been found to frustrate evaluation. This has been the case where programmes themselves, or their priorities, change over successive waves and where other policy changes affect the ability of the programme to work.

Conceptual conundrums feature highly and could be increasingly complex if more and more Area-based Initiatives are announced covering different priorities, different areas, and involving a wide range of stakeholders. The question as to whether robust evaluation is really possible arises in this review and must remain an over-arching question unless a simplified hierarchy or matrix of Area-based Initiatives emerges as a result of Local Strategic Partnerships and the Government's reviews of Area-based Initiatives through the Regional Co-ordination Unit (NRU 2002c see Section 6.9 below).

Timing is an issue in the transfer of learning, Table Fifteen, shows the period of life for each evaluation programme and the point(s) during the life of the programme when evaluation was undertaken. One of the conditions

necessary for learning to be passed on is that the evaluation work should have been timed to permit knowledge transfer. That is; that one programme had been evaluated before the next one was designed or started. English evaluations are only one element of possible learning, there is some, little, evidence that programmes such as the Garden Festivals (DOE: 1990a) were informed by European and American experience. It is also regarded by some practitioners as essential that evaluation begins early enough in the programme that 'before and after' data can be collected properly and the programme informed by emerging findings. This is explained well in the draft Local Evaluation and Strategies discussion paper from the Clapham Park New Deal for Communities programme:

Evaluation needs to be considered and planned at the very start of the project life cycle as an ever-present part of delivery to ensure that measurement of progress is as relevant and informative as possible (CPP 2004: 3).

It can be seen from the time-based Table Fifteen there is no evident correlation between when evaluations were conducted and when the next programme was launched. Almost every new programme was launched in advance of the evaluation of its immediate predecessors. It can perhaps be said that when City Challenge was introduced it could have benefited from a number of previous evaluations that had been published by then. However the programme design did not seem to have been informed by these evaluations. The private/public partnership-led, area-based, challenge model seems to have emerged from changes in political beliefs at the time.

It can then be seen that the Single Regeneration Budget was launched before City Challenge was evaluated but there is evidence that Single Regeneration Budget learnt some lessons from the interim evaluation of City Challenge (for example; the value of Community Forums). The New Deal for Communities was also launched before the evaluation of the Single Regeneration Budget was complete.



However, the New Commitment to Regeneration which was the basis for the Local Strategic Partnership/Neighbourhood Renewal approach was rolled out in the light of published evaluations of pilot areas. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU 2002a: 130) have confirmed that timing was a problem by stating that the New Deal for Communities evaluation: “differs in one respect from most of these types of studies – it takes place during rather than after the lifetime of the programme. That allows us to learn lessons more immediately and to put things right which may be going wrong more quickly”.

It must also be considered that the officers commissioning and supervising evaluations would be aware of emerging lessons from evaluation work in advance of the publication dates and this might mitigate the problem of the subsequent programme being launched before the evaluation of the previous programme is complete. The Inner City Research Programme evaluations, for example, were internally steered by departmental or interdepartmental groups so there would have been an opportunity for early learning on these. Since City Challenge, evaluations have also been commissioned by local programmes there is also the potential for learning by stakeholders as the work is undertaken. Indeed in Chapter Six there are examples of this. However examination of Table Fifteen and the Case Study results in Chapter Six suggest that the opportunities for this were very limited. This is mainly because of when new programmes were launched in relation to the previous programmes rather than the timing of evaluations. It can be concluded that timing was a barrier to transfer of learning in many but not all cases.

**Table Sixteen: Time based potential transfer of evaluation lessons.**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Possible feed in of evaluations</b>
Urban Programme.	None or possibly Community Development Programmes?
Enterprise Zones.	None.
Urban Development Grant, Urban Regeneration Grant, and City Grant.	None.
Garden Festivals.	International experience.
Inner City Task Force.	Urban policy and Industrial and Commercial Improvement Area.
Industrial and Commercial Improvement Area.	None or Community Development Programmes.
ESF Obj3 Priority 3.	All the preceding programmes.
City Challenge.	All the preceding programmes.
Single Regeneration Budget.	Introduced before the City Challenge evaluation.
Housing Action Trusts.	This may have been informed by housing research and evaluation.
New Deal for Communities.	Introduced before the evaluation of Single Regeneration Budget was published but informed by the interim evaluations.
New Commitment to Regeneration.	Informed by evaluation of City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget and other programmes.
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.	Work of Social Exclusion Unit, evaluation of Single Regeneration Budget and New Commitment to Renewal.

#### **6.4 Conceptual problems with the use of information.**

As examined in Chapter Five there is evidence from documented evaluations of operators having considerable difficulties with the development of and use of indicators. There are also consistent question-marks over various programmes about the accuracy and usefulness of indicators. Much work has been conducted as a result of recent programmes and the emergence of



groups such as the New Economics Foundation. However whether this can keep up with the increasingly complex demands of the new Area-based Initiatives and Local Strategic Partnerships remains to be established.

As far back as 1992 the Department of the Environment's Inner City Research Programme commissioned research on "Developing indicators to assess the potential for urban regeneration" (DOE 1992e). This is the report of an attempt to identify indicators to assess the potential of the Urban Programme areas for physical regeneration. Through literature review and consultations six resource categories were identified: Locational, Financial, Infrastructural, Amenity, Intangible, and Human (DOE 1992e: 20). This provides a framework for a checklist of an areas strengths and weaknesses. These indicators are then detailed and assessed against five applicability requirements: Data availability, geographical specification, time series and dynamics, implementation and interpretability. Most of the indicators were piloted on three exemplar Urban Programme areas.

This research identified that a major issue is that few geographical sources were geographically coded in a way that assists data collection in inner city areas. However, the research suggests that "this problem is mitigated by the view that inner-city potential is mostly shaped at the wider scale of the local authority area or the local economy so few indicators need to be operationalised at the inner city scale" (DOE 1992e: 20).

This was an abortive attempt to develop a complete set of indicators for change that covered every aspect of life in an area. It had the fundamental weakness as stated above that it could not measure accurately for Area-based Initiatives as the area specific information is not collected. A clear need for statistics to be available down to post-code areas was identified and that there was a need for more routine collection of statistics locally. The report made clear the problems which current evaluation practice is still struggling with: "the over-riding recommendation is that the need to monitor, compare, and evaluate – that is the need for indicators – should become more central to policy design than it has been to date" (DOE 1992e: 20).

The research recognises the importance of community cohesion and proposes two measures for this; spatial polarisation and voluntary group activity.

Another major finding is that many of the statistics collected are about “problems” which makes the drive to use indicators to audit “opportunities” difficult. Ten years later the Social Exclusion Unit’s Policy Action Team 18 report (SEU 2000) was still grappling with this issue. This Policy Action Team report comprehensively lists problems of poor and unshared information that still exist despite the widespread recognition of these problems in successive research and evaluation papers. The report goes on to state almost despair at the present situation: “Successive Governments have invested billions of pounds on the country’s deprived neighbourhoods. Yet there is little hard evidence of, or information on, which programmes have worked” (SEU 2000: 12).

As an example of this an analysis of 335 community safety initiatives by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary found that only 47 had been properly evaluated (HMIC 1998: 30-33). The absence of rigorous evaluations of techniques and approaches in many fields of policy - and adequate data to do so - means money may be wasted on measures that do not work and successful programmes do not get rolled out” (SEU 2000: 12). The Policy Action Team 18 report also found that:

Lack of good information forces new partnerships, zones and other initiatives to collect fresh data, and invent new indicators. This wastes both time and money. For example, New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas, such as Norwich and Tower Hamlets, had to spend large sums to undertake research including attitude surveys and establishing baselines indicators. The amount spent in these areas varied between £40,000 and £50,000 (SEU 2000: 12).

This follows logically from the conclusion by the Single Regeneration Budget evaluation team that the only way to really measure impacts is to commission social surveys. Their conclusion is that lack of information has



been at the heart of policy failure in this area. Poor information has created four key problems: lack of awareness of neighbourhood problems and trends by communities, local and national government; poor diagnosis of problems has led to poor government strategies and resource allocation; lack of information has forced new programmes to spend time and money collecting new information; and lack of information has meant it is difficult to tell whether policies work (DETR 1998: 76).

The belief that producing more and better information would save programmes from having to produce their own information needs careful analysis. Consideration of the fact that there were over 600 different Single Regeneration Budget programmes all needing to measure a wide range of different things (for example; from improved parenting skills through to decontamination of land) suggests that an enormous database of information on almost every aspect of life would be required.

Following on from the work of the Policy Action Teams the Social Exclusion Unit produced the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (SEU 2001). This strategy identifies a key failure as being insufficient information and poor use of it and goes on to assert that failures and successes of mainstream programmes and special interventions have gone unidentified. Thus at the highest level of policy it was recognised albeit after over 30 years of urban regeneration programmes and programme evaluations that failure to learn the lessons, passing them on and then apply them was holding back the progress of many deprived areas.

## **6.5 Increasing engagement of stakeholders.**

Some of the early evaluations studied (for example; Enterprise Zones) had little or no wider stakeholder involvement. A significant change over time has been the engagement of many more stakeholders in aspects of programmes. This means that a stakeholder approach to evaluation is much easier to conduct, particularly with local communities. It is clear that

consulting the local stakeholders and residents has been a long running theme over the study period. Much evaluation has been undertaken with beneficiaries but there is also a clear thread of work having been undertaken over the years with non-gainers too. This aspect may become lost as current programmes style themselves as all inclusive programmes and it is assumed that everyone is a gainer.

## **6.6 Relationship between local and national evaluations.**

The relationship between local and national evaluations has also evolved over the studied period. The trend initially was to treat local evaluations as case studies of national programmes but there is a tendency now to conduct local evaluations that are locally commissioned and independently conducted. This is usually in addition to major national evaluations which also have local elements.

## **6.7 Evidence of transfer of learning.**

From this documentary analysis some evidence has emerged that the transfer of learning was specifically intended and was facilitated in some way. An example is the evaluation of Industrial and Commercial Improvement Areas which in the forward states:

The results of this research have already been assimilated by the Department and, largely on the basis of this work a guidance note has been issued (DOE 1993a: 1).

A further example was the evaluation of the European Social Fund Objective Three, Priority Four report which states that the evaluation is intended to provide lessons for current and future programmes in particular the 2000-2006 Objective 3 Programme and a summary have been made available on the Department for Education and Science web- site (DfEE 1999).



There is some limited evidence that evaluation does lead to changes in future programmes, for example the City Challenge evaluation (DETR 2000a: 24) finds that: “City Challenge represented a significant shift in regeneration policy. It addressed many of the limitations of previous urban policy initiatives”. The report cites lessons that City Challenge learnt from the cross-cutting report “Assessing the Impact of Urban Policy” (DOE 1994a). The report then sets out five areas in which City Challenge was found to have learnt from that Department of the Environment cross-cutting study by Robson *et al.* In the light of the perceived failure of previous initiatives the report emphasises a number of points that policy deliverers and recipients believed were addressed by City Challenge.

The New Commitment to Regeneration evaluation finds that the programme was based on the lessons learnt from previous programmes, in particular those that were learnt through the Policy Action Teams. They acknowledge: “the efforts of both central and local government, in co-operation with others, to learn from previous attempts to regenerate deprived areas and to form a consensus on how to proceed” (Audit Commission 2002: 5).

There is some documented evidence of learning being applied to the design of future programmes. Some written evaluations point to how their findings might be implemented, for example; the evaluation of English Partnerships (NAO 1999: 2) specifically states that “The report seeks to draw out lessons learned from the English Partnerships approach. It will fall to the Department, the newly constituted English Partnerships and Regional Development Agencies to take forward the report’s recommendations”. This was a reference to the new role that English Partnerships was to assume after the establishment of Regional Development Agencies and its assumption of many of the assets and duties of the Commission for the New Towns. In their report “Turning Areas Around” Dr Peter Tyler and his National Evaluation Team at Cambridge found that with reference to lessons from the Single Regeneration Budget programme:

The Policy Response has been to develop Local Strategic Partnerships and to allocate funding through New Deal for Communities to the most deprived areas, while Regional Development Agencies have been enabled to respond to a region's wider regeneration issues through the single budget (Tyler 2002b: 9).

Another example is that Arup, in conducting the Department of the Environment's (1991) evaluation of policy instruments for tackling land vacancy, included a comprehensive overview of the lesson learned from previous studies and a summary of the conditions for effectiveness. Another positive example of this is the Lambeth Southwark and Lewisham Health Action Zone, Healthy Communities Fund (Tooke 2001: 13). A key recommendation was that a ceiling should be put on the size of organisations that could apply for grants. This has now been done (though there is no evidence showing that this was directly as a result of the evaluation). There is documentary evidence that the information was disseminated as highlights were sent out to key decision makers (Bennet 2002; 1-2). This was accompanied by a series of fact sheets called "Hazlearning" In this example a partnership was formed of various Health Action Zones which specifically dealt with ensuring that learning from Health Action Zone working reaches policy makers and practitioners and feeds into how they make decisions and deliver services" (LSL HAZ 2002: 1-2). This fact sheet also offers a model or categorising and disseminating learning.

One negative confirmation that lessons were learned is documented in the evaluation of the National Garden Festival programme which states that "perhaps there was too much confidence that the lessons from Liverpool could be applied" (DOE 1990b: 56). The report found that there was a high expectation that lessons would be learnt from Liverpool's experience of land reclamation but as it happened the site conditions were very different. This is an example of where the transfer of learning is restricted by the different contexts in which regeneration is occurring.



Only these few examples have been found, in this study, of evidential proof of transfer of learning but this may be because the learning process within departments and partnerships is less publicly documented than the outcome of the learning. The case study research has produced some evidence of this (Chapter Seven) below. However there are still many reasons why the assumption that there is a transfer of learning can be questioned.

Another area where evaluation has clearly benefited from previous work is in the question of capacity building. There has been a definite move over time towards increasing the capacity of all concerned to understand, participate in, implement and monitor and evaluate. This has helped improve the materials with which evaluators have to work. Learning and best practice transfer is a theme that has become much more externalised. In early evaluations it appears from analysing the published documents, though was not stated, that the work was done primarily so that the Government could check how its programmes work and inform its future programme decisions and design. Over the study period this has changed to a much more external, collective, learning approach. The ways in which evaluations are conducted has become much more participatory and the purposes much more explicitly about best practice and learning transfer. Evaluations have also evolved over the study period in terms of their content. Themes that have emerged strongly include sustainability, community involvement, and process measures. Themes that are now less clear cut or given less weight include single measures such as “jobs created” with there being much more emphasis now on outcomes rather than (or in addition to) outputs. Finally there is a history of “grand reviews”, attempts either to assess the holistic impact of urban policy (DETR 1994) or bodies such as the Urban Task Force and the Social Exclusion Unit conducting large scale reviews. These have all highlighted and lamented the core evaluation issues such as poor information and policy confusion.

## **6.8 Programmes succeeding but for different objectives.**

The Industrial and Commercial Improvement Area programme (DOE 1983a) is an example of where the programme was found by the evaluation team to be achieving outputs. However, the evaluation issue was that the intervention's stated objectives were economic development but, in practice, grants were given for largely environmental works which only indirectly would give economic development outcomes such as creating jobs. The dilemma is that funding-led programmes tend to have to evaluate against their set objectives even though they may be achieving a lot of other "good".

## **6.9 Conclusions.**

This review of evaluations over two decades has shown that the process of evaluation has evolved, much in line with the thinking about regeneration generally. However, long running issues about data quality, indicators, and the proliferation of initiatives remain. Many evaluations have not just produced lessons for policy but also for future evaluations. There is evidence that there have been plenty of lessons to be learnt but almost no reference in the reports studied as to whether one programme has learnt the lessons of previous ones. To ascertain this, the final stage in the research was required – the stakeholder interviews. In this Chapter it has been demonstrated that there is some documented evidence that evaluations have learnt from each other and this has been happening more recently. This chapter has only partially contributed to answering the research question. The theory and documented practice needed to be tested in more detail and this has been undertaken in four case study areas to test the actuality against the documentation. These are reported in Chapter Seven.



## **Chapter seven: The Case studies.**

### **7.1 Introduction.**

This chapter will report on the four case studies which are a crucial part of the original research in this study. The case studies are a further necessary research stage to gather the evidence from different aspects of this study that can be triangulated to enable a more reliable picture to be given of the extent to which the transfer of learning may have taken place. Four programmes (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget and New Deal for Communities), from those examined in Chapter Six, were selected to be examined in more detail and the rationale for this is explained below.

The choice of case studies has been made because of the need to triangulate and test the data from written sources in order to properly test the hypothesis regarding the transfer of learning between programmes. The written materials and time-lines have suggested that the transfer of learning could, in some cases, have taken place. The case studies were needed to check, by in depth interview, whether the transfer did in fact take place. Robson (2002: 177-184) recognises this as a “confirmatory case study”.

The choice of methodology for the interviews is explained and justified with reference to Bell (1999: 135); Bowling (2002: 311); Pawson and Tilley (1997: 143-164) and Robson (2002: 269-291). The methodology aims:

- To understand how learning takes place.
- To identify suitable indicators of learning relevant to transfer of learning from one programme to the next.
- To identify the body of stakeholders, the study of whose behaviour, might lead to relevant answers.
- To devise a suitable research approach in this case semi-structured interviews.
- To analyse the results to see what can be adduced in term of the research hypothesis.

Finally, this chapter will then triangulate and synthesis the findings from stakeholder interviews, the analysis of published evaluations and theory to arrive at rounded conclusions.

## **7.2 Understanding how learning takes place.**

Chapter Three 'explores some of the definitions of learning and some important lessons from learning theory, analysis of which suggests that 'standards' needed to be adopted in the approach to and analysis of the case studies. The following 'standards' have been developed:

- There is no single, applicable, definition of learning that can be used in a complex field such as this.
- That there are many possible mechanisms and contexts for learning and it is both the contexts and mechanisms (and their inter-action) that are important in research such as this.
- That learning takes place in many ways and it does not have to be formal to register as learning.
- That the mere production and dissemination of materials is not, in itself, evidence that learning has transferred.
- That learning takes place at different levels (McInroy 2004: 14) and that local "deep rooted and intuitive knowledge" may be more important than formal evaluations and is found in the local practitioners.
- That learning is "a life-long activity as we constantly adjust to social, economic and technological changes" (Paechter *et al* 2001: 2).
- People learn from their social surroundings, by how people react to circumstances, because they are motivated by and or love the subject and because they respect the subject (Winch 2001: 183-184).
- That a lot of learning is "situated" in the context.



As Winch (2001: 183) says there is no grand theory of learning by which it is possible to tick the box and say “learning has taken place”. Evidence needs to be collected and Robson (2002: 35) suggests an approach for this situation which he describes as a search for “mechanisms and contexts” by which learning might transfer. In the absence of a sufficient body of documentary evidence (as explored in Chapter six) Robson suggest that a process of “following up leads” is needed and this is the rationale for the stakeholder research.

Smith and Grimshaw (2005: 189-203) examine how organisations learn in the context of the New Deal for Communities programme and suggest that it is possible to distinguish between types of organisational learning as they occur at two levels. The first is the single loop learning where the strategies of an organisation change because those involved have learnt lessons. The second is the double loop learning where not only the strategies change but also the underlying theories of action which are questioned and can become transformed. In considering the design of the interview questions, these multi-layered possibilities had to be borne in mind.

Having established that this research needs to “follow up-leads” rather than simply “tick boxes” it was necessary to identify what the visible signs of learning having taken place and being transferred might be. This required a search for indicators of learning and learning transfer. As evaluation reports have been until recently the principal documented vehicle for transfer of learning importance has been given to them in this research.

The literature search revealed that some consideration had already been given to this challenge by Patton (1997: 79-85) who had examined programme evaluations and the elements or attributes that would make the transfer of learning more likely. He found that the following issues needed to be addressed in order to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will be “seen and heard”: The relationship to the decisions to be influenced, who will make them and in what timescale? The context including what is at stake; what is the history; what are the other influencing factors; how volatile

is the decision-making environment?; How much influence can the evaluation have, what is needed in terms of data, findings and other actions to achieve that influence? Patton breaks the above headings down into criteria which can be applied to assess evaluations. These criteria are documented in Table Seventeen (below) and were used to inform the design of the stakeholder questionnaire used in this research. It was therefore possible to design a questionnaire informed by both the documentary analysis of previous evaluations and theory which addresses the likely indicators of transfer of learning. Table Seventeen shows the question number from the stakeholder questionnaire that addresses each criterion.

**Table Seventeen: Patton's checklist and the stakeholder questions**

<b>Patton's checklist for the improving the likelihood that an evaluation will be seen and heard by policy makers.</b>	<b>Tests for stakeholder interviews adapted for Ian Sesnan's PhD and relevant interview question number.</b>
What decisions are findings expected to influence?	That evaluation is relevant to the programme in question (Q20).
When will the decisions be made? By whom? When must the evaluation findings be present to be timely and influential?	Was the evaluation in time to be of utility? (Q18).
What is at stake in the decisions? For whom? What controversies or issues surround the decisions?	What were the imperatives or drivers at that time? (Q25).
What is the history and context of the decision-making process?	What is the history and context of the decision-making process? All the questions.
What other factors will affect the decision-making? What might happen to make the decision irrelevant or keep it from being made? In other words, how volatile is the decision-making environment?	To what extent was there a climate whereby the evaluation findings could influence the programme? (Q26)
How much influence do you expect the evaluation to have – realistically?	How much influence did the evaluation have? (Q21&22).
To what extent has the outcome of the decision already been determined?	To what extent was the programme open to influence from evaluation? (Q21&22).
What data and findings are needed to support decision-making?	Did you have data and findings from previous programmes needed to support decision-making? (Q11-15).
What needs to be done to achieve that level of influence?	What would have needed to be in place for any transfer of learning to have taken place? (Question sets 1-4).
How will we know afterwards if the evaluation was used as intended? In effect, how can use be measured?	Is there any way of measuring the extent to which evaluation work was used? (Q3,16 & 27).

Source: Patton (1997: 83).



The next challenge faced by this study was to secure the identified stakeholders for interview. Sixteen were asked to take part and fifteen were available and were interviewed. Given that they are mainly very senior people this displayed a high degree of interest in the subject. The data gathered from the fifteen key people has proved sufficient for this research. Stakeholders from all the aspects of regeneration emphasised how this was an important area of study. Those that were currently employed by the Government emphasised their belief in evaluation and how they themselves tried to secure its application. The retired Government interviewee was much more sceptical, possibly because he was now free to speak his mind or because his experience of evaluation was much more historic, coming from a time before evaluation became of the importance that it has now achieved.

The community leaders displayed a belief in evaluation provided that it was independent and well conducted but were cynical about the amount that those “in power” learn from it. The programme management interviewees tended to believe in evaluation but felt that the earlier evaluations were clearly not conducted to a standard that they would wish. The research was therefore made achievable because all of the interviewees recognised the importance of the subject. The fact that this is a live issue was illustrated by both the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and a New Deal for Communities programme both wishing to discuss the research while in progress.

### **7.3 The role, purpose, and methodology of the Case Studies.**

The case studies analyse practice against theory with inputs from Central Government, local government, programme managers, and community representatives. These case studies are triangulated with the other data and conclusions can be drawn concerning the development, application and operation of transfer of learning across regeneration programmes over the study period. The case studies are a crucial part of the original research in this study. They are the point at which the evidence from different aspects of

this research is triangulated to enable a more reliable picture of what happened to be established.

The use of case studies is been defined by Yin as: “...a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence” Yin (1981: 97-114). Thus the theoretical analysis, the time-line and content analysis are brought together with the opinions of the contemporary actors to enable synthesis and analysis leading to provisional conclusions being drawn. Robson (2002: 177-184) describes case study as a strategy of enquiry that is empirical but focussed on a “phenomenon in context” and uses multiple methods of evidence or data collection. The methodology used for the case studies is ‘content analysis’ and follows a plan suggested by Robson including:

- The overview including background, reasons for the research, issues and relevant reading etc;
- Procedures - choosing and accessing subjects, schedules, and resources available;
- The research questions and the evidence sources and techniques to be used;
- Reporting – what is to be reported to whom in what format (in this case in what form must it be reported to meet the requirements of PhD research) (Robson 2002: 177-184).

#### **7.4 The selection of the case studies.**

The case studies are used for testing the evaluation matrix and timeline and the documentary research against practice. Case studies from each of four main programmes have been conducted. The City Challenge programme has been chosen as it was the earliest major regeneration programme that had structured evaluation requirements for which there is still a group (known to the researcher) of participants available to interview.



The Single Regeneration Budget was chosen because it was the immediate successor to, and replacement of, City Challenge (and other programmes).

The Department of Land Economy at the University of Cambridge had the task of conducting the interim evaluation (DETR 1998). The team regarded the Single Regeneration Budget programme as requiring the most complex evaluation yet, so it is an important example.

The New Deal for Communities programme has been chosen for a similar reason, it was announced by the Government as addressing some of the shortcomings of previous programmes (for example short life and not community-led). Finally, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has been chosen as it represents current practice and those involved should have benefited from the learning of the Social Exclusion Unit and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

### **7.5 Designing the Case Studies.**

Data on each case was compiled based on: The information gathered in stage two; completed evaluation reports; critical reviews from theory of these reports and the programmes and; the evaluation matrix and timeline.

This data was tested by interviews with stakeholders from each programme. The interviews needed to be designed to assist with the construction of an answer to the research hypothesis: “that there is no evidence that learning takes place between regeneration programmes”. Based on the work of Robson (2002) the following three key steps have been undertaken: A set of questions was developed; places where prompts may be used were identified and; a putative sequence of questions identified.

The interview questions and format were pre-tested with stakeholders who are similar in experience to the case study interviewees. This enabled the wording, subject matter, and length of the questions and the format of the interview to be refined. Two experienced people were interviewed to explore

the potential questions and identify any potential problems and opportunities with the interviews. One of the trial interviewees had significant experience from a community perspective of serving on and accessing regeneration programmes and one with significant experience of managing programmes.

Designing the questionnaire was of great importance, Oppenheim (1966: vii) warned against complacency when he wrote that: “the world is full of well meaning people who believe that anyone who can write plain English and has a modicum of common sense can design a questionnaire”. Consideration was given to the most appropriate form of data gathering using the questionnaire. A postal questionnaire has the attraction of being easy to administer but Bell (1999: 135) suggests that “a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability. A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses, and investigate motives and feelings which a questionnaire can never do”. Given that the research topic, in this instance, is one where there is considerable difficulty in defining terms and considerable complexity in stakeholder roles these advantages will be very important in ensuring that valid and usable data is being collected.

There are three main types of interview. The first is the structured interview in which a fixed set of questions is asked in a fixed order, as Robson (2002: 269-291) says “they are more likely to be contributing to a fixed design alongside other methods” and content analysis is commonly used. This type of interviewing would be particularly useful when there are time pressures or where multiple interviewers may be used as it can help to limit the range covered by responses.

The semi-structured interview is similar but allows for the sequence of questions to be varied and for prompts and a more flexible approach as to how the subject is covered in accordance with the interviewee’s responses. Specifically it allows for the sequence and exact wording of questions to be varied which was found to be important in the trial interviews. As the interviews are promoting an intellectual search rather than seeking bureaucratic replies it has been found necessary sometimes to interrogate the



subject the respondent is on rather than formulaically move to the next subject. This meant that a long questionnaire of twenty seven questions plus prompts could be used while sticking to a reasonable timescale of 45-60 minutes. This was particularly important given the range of the interviewees, for example; Chief Executives with thirty years experience and community leaders. Therefore this method was the one selected as it achieved the balance between limiting the responses to a manageable length and allowing for areas to be probed until the maximum relevant information is achieved. The third type of interview is the open interview but this was rejected as it would not ensure sufficient validity in terms of being able to compare the responses between the interviewees.

Robson (2002: 289) states that “wherever possible interviews should be audio-taped” though he makes an exception for informal interviews where tape-recording could be intrusive. He also allows for transcription of only the relevant sections to avoid overload.

Reporting of the findings is not problematic in this case as the case studies are for internal use in this PhD thesis only. In conducting the interviews there are some considerable pitfalls to be aware of. Bowling suggests that a good interviewer needs to have many qualities: Sensitivity; Good rapport with a wide range of people; Motivating; Friendly and positive; Trustworthy; Good listener; Not interrupting; Committed; Persevering; A neutral manner; Clear voice; Accurate in recording details; Legible handwriting; Adept at leaving the respondent happy (Bowling 2002: 311). She also suggests that the dangers to be aware of include: the interviewer introducing his/her own bias; the sample being biased; the presence of third parties and other distractions; questions being misunderstood; respondent not wishing to divulge certain information and inappropriate probing.

## **7.6 The stakeholder questionnaire.**

Robson (2002: 274) suggests that there are three main types of question normally used in research interviews: Closed; Open and Scale. The main advantage of closed questions is ease of analysis and in some cases comparability of answers. However for a subject such as the present study it is the context to the answers as much as the answers themselves that is needed so closed questions were rejected. Scale questions also aim to produce easier to analyse, and in some cases possibly more comparable, answers. These were rejected as the four case studies are not comparing like with like and the interviewees all had different perspectives.

Youngman (1986 in Bell 1999: 119) suggests that there are seven question types: Verbal or Open; List; Category; Ranking; Scale; Quantity and Grid. However Youngman accepts that all of these, apart from Verbal, limit the scope for the respondent to give the full range of information that they have. Therefore open questions were chosen as these were felt most likely to give fuller information in accordance with the nature of semi-structured interviews. The questions were designed based on a time sequence, that is; pre-programme, or involvement in programme, during programme, post-hoc and then reflective questions. Robson gives guidance as to pitfalls that may trap those writing questions and the interview questions were tested against these:

- Long questions may lead the interviewee to answering the only part of it that they remember.
- “Multiple – barrellled” questions can lead to difficulty in analysis as it may not be possible to tell which part of the question was being answered.
- Jargon can lead to disturbing interviewees therefore disrupting the flow of the interview.
- Leading questions can make the answers biased.
- Biased question or questioning can distort the results (Robson 2002: 275).



## **7.7 Choice of questions and design of the questionnaire.**

The evidence sought in these case studies is that of the transfer of learning, as discussed in Chapter Three. A process of exploration was needed as learning is a complex concept and can take many forms. There may be no clear cut signal that learning has taken place as stakeholders may not even be aware that they have learnt. Patton (1997) suggests a checklist for whether evaluation results are likely to be used and this has been interpreted in Table Seventeen (above) to inform the selection of questions. Based on Patton's checklist, criteria have been developed for obtaining, recognising, and categorising evidence and these are:

### **Process criteria:**

- 1) Having read evaluation documentation.
- 2) Having taken part in formal training, workshops, networking and similar activities.
- 3) Having taken part in informal discussions, e-groups or visited other programmes to learn.
- 4) Having considerable experience.
- 5) Having used evaluation including having produced dissemination materials.

### **Learning criteria:**

- 1) Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from an experience.
- 2) Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from reading formal evaluation reports.
- 3) Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from informal discussions etc.
- 4) Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from formal training workshops etc.
- 5) Expressing the view that they have learnt from visiting other programmes.
- 6) Expressing the view that the subject has transferred learning from one programme to the next.

- 7) Expressing the view that the subject has undertaken learning of their own.
- 8) Feelings on the benefits of evaluation.
- 9) Negative experiences of evaluation.
- 10) Good experiences of evaluation.
- 11) Evaluation in life outside regeneration programmes.
- 12) Using pathfinders/pilot programmes to learn from.

**Table Eighteen: Interviewees identified from selected programmes.**

<i>Representative</i>	<i>Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in a Southern City.</i>	<i>City Challenge in a London Borough</i>	<i>Single Regeneration Budget in a Midlands City.</i>	<i>New Deal for Communities in a London Borough.</i>
Programme	Partnership Manager	Finance Director	Seconded programme manager	Chief Executive
Council	Senior Manager	Head of regeneration	Head of regeneration	Senior manager
Government	Government Office lead	Government Office lead	Private Sector Chair	Government Office lead
Community	Community leader	Community leader	Community leader	Community leader

### **7.8 Analysis of the stakeholder interviews.**

The interviews have been analysed using content analysis to assist in ensuring that the evidence therein is given equal weight across the varied stakeholders. Scriven describes content analysis as: “The process of systematically determining the characteristics of a body of material or practices” (Scriven 1991: 99). Table Eighteen lists the anonymised stakeholders that were selected for case study interviews. Table Nineteen shows examples from the interviews of evidence for each of the criteria. These are then analysed and synthesised in the following sections (7.9-7.11). Each example of content has been awarded a score based on the Key to Table 19. These scores have been assessed by using judgements of the extent to which the content suggests that a criterion have been met. The main role of the scores is to highlight the most significant content.



**Table Nineteen: Results from the stakeholder interviews by criteria.**

Key to Table Nineteen: The initials refer to the role of the respondent. The narrative in the table is content taken from that person’s interview.

GO SRB	The Government Officer interviewed for their experience on the Single Regeneration Budget programme.
GO NDC	The Government Officer interviewed for their experience on the New Deal for Communities programme.
GO NRF	The Government Officer interviewed for their experience on the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund programme.
GO CC	The Government Officer interviewed for their experience on the City Challenge programme.
COM SRB	The community (private sector) leader interviewed for their experience on the Single Regeneration Budget.
COM NDC	The community leader interviewed for their experience on the New Deal for Communities programme.
COM NRF	The community leader interviewed for their experience on the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund programme.
COM CC	The community leader interviewed for their experience on the City Challenge programme.
PM SRB	The programme manager interviewed for their experience on the Single Regeneration Budget programme.
PM NDC	The programme manager interviewed for their experience on the New Deal for Communities programme.
PM NRF	The programme manager interviewed for their experience on the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund programme.
PM CC	The programme manager interviewed for their experience on the City Challenge programme.
COU SRB	The council officer interviewed for their experience on the Single Regeneration Budget programme.
COU NDC	The council officer interviewed for their experience on the New Deal for Communities programme.
COU NRF	The council officer interviewed for their experience on the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund programme.
COU CC	The council officer interviewed for their experience on the City Challenge programme.

Key to Table Nineteen continued: Assessment of content for relative contribution to transfer of learning between programmes.

Score	Assessment
5	A definite example of a claimed transfer of learning.
4	Actions very likely to have led to transfer of learning.
3	Actions likely to have led to transfer of learning even if indirectly.
2	Steps that could have helped facilitate learning.
1	Incidental or contributory actions that may set the scene for learning.
0	No learning or not applicable.

<b>Process criteria:</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>1) Having read evaluation documentation.</b>	
COM CC: I do use the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister web-site and read papers and look at best practice projects.	<b>4</b>
COM SRB: I had direct knowledge of a programme but did not think it was a very good example for us. Other examples were put forward by the Chief Executive that were examples of lasting legacies. I had not read the evaluation reports before this project but there was a continual learning process through the programme.	<b>3</b>
COU NDC: I saw bits of the City Challenge evaluation while at the New Deal for Communities programme.	<b>2</b>
PM SRB: Not specifically, but I did read some as part of training. We shared documents between the network of North Staffordshire programmes. We were the first to get to mid-point and the end so we were reading other people's mid-points evaluations as we came to our end.	<b>2</b>
GO NDC: There was a Housing Action Trusts transfer of lessons document but if transfer happened it was only because of staff that worked on both models there was a paper written but not sure it was used to its full extent.	<b>2</b>
PM CC: No, apart from a lot of stuff around about City Action Teams I don't recall reading anything assiduously. In my studies I had looked at evaluation zones going back to the Community Development Programmes. I don't think I learnt anything from this because we needed to focus on what we would need for City Challenge. What we were brought together for was for our knowledge of the area and our professional backgrounds, for example; planning and housing but also I had community experience from my activism in the area.	<b>1</b>



<b>Process criterion 2: Having taken part in formal training, workshops, networking and similar activities.</b>	<b>Score</b>
GO NRF: Yes, as part of the civil service infrastructure we have a lot of training opportunities for staff working in the regeneration arena (which I have worked in for 10 years now on City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget etc). We have a range of formal and informal opportunities including a course on the “products”. I have attained the ‘Corporate MIProfDev’ which was employment related and I have been to a number of conferences both to speak and learn about regeneration over a number of years. We created a regional network. We had only four Neighbourhood Renewal Fund programmes so a network was created and range of events were held predicated on the Policy Action Team reports. Yes we sat down and discussed Neighbourhood Renewal Fund with regional colleagues.	<b>4</b>
GO NRF: We use the national Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, universities and consultants. We have leads across the nine government offices in terms of policy development. Evaluation doesn’t come to each Government Office it comes to the two that are designated for that area of work (not the Government Office of South East) they take on the responsibility to give advice to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and they feed back regional views. We get the opportunity to comment, look at terms of reference, discuss it and offer comments back to the regional group. We also have meetings both formal ones and free-for-all chat about everything going on – once we see the responses there will be a key debate among the network officers about the changes.	<b>4</b>
PM CC: We ran numerous little sessions around the area listening to stakeholders and this did impact on the programme for example, the involvement of Stockwell Park School was very high profile in the bid.	<b>3</b>
PM NRF: Conferences were most useful where there are discussions.	<b>2</b>
GO NDC: Yes I am on a team with colleagues involved in the New Deal for Communities at two London New Deal for Communities programmes and I have worked with colleagues involved in these from day one.	<b>2</b>
COM SRB: I attended urban regeneration workshops that my company (architects, town planners and designers) run.	<b>2</b>

<b>Process criterion 2 continued: Having taken part in formal training, workshops, networking and similar activities.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COM NDC: I attended a national New Deal for Communities event, it was a great experience to go there, it was amazing what so many people are doing to build up their community so many interesting people there. Worth going to, I would advise anyone to go – been to one other one at Birmingham. It was the same regeneration people from all over talking about what is working in New Deal for Communities and what is not working.	<b>2</b>
COM NDC: Went to Canary Wharf away day and an away day at Convoy's Wharf. We also had a seminar at Paddington at an Arts Centre. The Cornwall people (from our visit there) invited me. 2 days ago she rang and invited me to a seminar at the London School of Economics and to bring anyone from the New Deal for Communities. I promised to take her round here as well.	<b>2</b>
GO CC: Later there were workshops I went to one in Birmingham. The feedback we were getting was that people were unhappy and in ignorance and were all interpreting measures in different ways. If you had your own fiddle you kept quiet about it.	<b>2</b>
COM SRB: No specific training on how to Chair. I had experience of that and didn't think I needed that training but had numerous workshops with the City Council and the Executive Team. This was important for the community reps once they joined. The training seemed to work, we stayed together as a team over the years.	<b>2</b>
PM CC: We got no training, other City Challenges had the support of other councils, and we could only look on with envy. There was a national network of City Challenges and we did come together in conferences and we had sub-groups for things like monitoring. The Department of the Environment did do some things to tell you what to do and chat – but no skills development.	<b>1</b>
COM NDC: - Some of them (Board Members) get training arranged but if they are working they don't bother – they are supposed to be forced to do it. I was the first person sent on training on how to chair a meeting.	<b>1</b>



<b>Process criterion 3: Having taken part in informal discussions e-groups or visited other programmes to learn.</b>	<b>Score</b>
GO NDC: The (internal) emailing system is brilliant, people put out a general request. There is now a network for Local Strategic Partnerships where there is a chat room to swap problems and ideas but Government Offices have been doing this for years and it works.	3
COM NRF: I did the round visiting cities including Portsmouth, Brighton and Hasting with the Partnership Manager and a Senior Council Officer.	2
GO CC: You might have discussed City Challenge over coffee and moaning in the corridor but what you wanted was as many schemes as possible for your area. The discussions were not about lessons learnt.	1

<b>Process criterion 4: Having considerable experience.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COM SRB: I am a Chartered surveyor and Architect and have been Chair of the community partnership since 1991. I have served on the Chamber of Commerce/Enterprise Agency with a remit for regeneration some physical but mostly young people and education. I started "Aiming High" to raise aspirations of young people in Stoke on Trent. Michael Heseltine came to City and rejected the City Challenge bid and said we had to lose the past and look at vision became 20:20 vision – so we set up the City Forum.	4
COU NDC: I had worked for Lewisham Challenge Partnership, Deptford Task Force, Single Regeneration Budget and was also a Non-executive Director at Lewisham Hospital.	3
PM CC: My experience goes back to Community Development Programmes, Housing Action Areas and General Improvement Areas I am also now involved in City Growth Strategies.	3
COM NRF: I am chair of our Sustainability Forum and I might run a food market around the church - if it worked here it might spread elsewhere in the city. In the sixties I did religious training and did teaching and bits of training but have no formal learning about regeneration at all. My father was a city engineer in Exeter and Bristol. I remember the early employment programmes. I ran one of the first church-led ones and employed six people. I drew down experience from others and it worked; six people plus the manager got employment afterwards.	3
PM NRF: I had been involved in various regeneration programmes for years starting with physical ones and then SRB2, then wrote bids for SRB5/SRB6 and led the Council's New Commitment to Renewal Pathfinder.	3

<b>Process criterion 5: Use of evaluation and production of dissemination materials.</b>	<b>Score</b>
GO NDC: The New Deal for Communities programme does an evaluation of all their major projects so that they learn lessons and share good practice. I am asked all the time to alert people to good practice. Evaluation is recognised by everybody as an important tool if only for future projects.	<b>5</b>
GO NRF: The New Deal for Communities in the City is part of the national New Deal for Communities evaluation and we ensure that they take on board the specific recommendations in their Action Plans. It is really important that under the new post-Neighbourhood Renewal Fund way forward with 'Local Area Agreements' and 'Safer and Stronger Communities' there will be a focus on priority wards. Their inner city wards will probably get some extra money. So they need an infrastructure to evaluate what is going on.	<b>4</b>
GO NRF: In relation to Teenage Pregnancy our criticism of the City's Partnership was that they were a bit detached and had delegated responsibility to their partners but they didn't have an overview of why things were happening (for example; Teenage Pregnancy getting worse). If things are not happening it is their job to make them happen – they will be looking at their evaluation strategy and look at what others are doing – someone somewhere will have thought of a way of doing this. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is very good at this and they will have published studies. No one has all the answers but someone will have done it elsewhere. From 2006-07 there will be a formal negotiation based on what they have done. Have you bought the outcomes that you intended and how does that lead into what you are now suggesting? The Black and Minority Ethnic population will be important; we still have to pick up the impact on that population. We will be saying we want more evaluation of impact on ethnic minorities.	<b>4</b>
PM SRB: we commissioned North Staffordshire University to do a CD rom with interviews with residents, text from report and photos so that it could go into schools etc. I was invited to speak to a couple of other programmes about their upcoming evaluations and talked to people around the city council to try and ensure that things continued after the programme.	<b>4</b>



<b>Process criterion 5: Use of evaluation and production of dissemination materials.</b>	<b>Score</b>
PM SRB: There were times when we used consultants to go in and make recommendations on projects and sometimes they recommended that a project be shut down. They were asked to evaluate projects that we considered there were problems about and they might say 'this is appalling' in one or two cases or in other cases just make recommendations for improvement. We got a six month extension as we wanted monitoring to continue to show that targets were later achieved so that our performance wouldn't be held against the city.	<b>3</b>
COM SRB: Without evaluation there would be nothing to refer to nothing to measure against, it is really good to have an independent assessment.	<b>3</b>
PM CC: We needed an evaluation but decided that South Bank University would not be capable of doing it in time and we brought in a journalist to write up our story. We did a glossy magazine of what we felt had been achieved and put it on the record and distributed around the area.	<b>2</b>
COM SRB: I was part of the evaluation. The college came round with videos etc – but this was the end of the day (programme). Wherever that went whoever looked at it, I never saw a copy of a report that found conclusions. I don't know what the brief was for the evaluation I didn't input to it but I know a lot of harsh words were said by people who felt really let down and were a lot more brutal than I was.	<b>2</b>
PM NRF: Information guides and Learning booklets were sent out to everyone.	<b>2</b>
PM CC: Our journalistic evaluation was 'priority one' a public relations exercise to try to counter negative images being promulgated by the Council plus more poisonous stuff from some of the community board members. We focussed heavily on where we had successes and I don't think anyone would learn anything from reading this about how to do regeneration.	<b>1</b>

Learning criteria	
Learning criterion 1: Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from an experience.	Score
PM NRF: There was limited learning from the New Commitment to Renewal because it was primarily about mainstreaming. My understanding of project management has been more useful in Neighbourhood Renewal Fund work.	3
COU NDC: I have no qualifications but I have learnt from experience, including seven years in Deptford with Joe Montgomery.	3
GO NDC: I worked on Urban Policy, Housing Action Trusts, and Single Regeneration Budget etc.	3
COM SRB: I think the majority were learning and wanting to and there were some that just didn't want to learn. I don't think they realised how much they had learnt, you couldn't be involved in something for six years without it having an effect. Phyllis Lee developed strong leadership skills and was our representative to Government Office, she started from never having done anything to being a star, at the end of the day she became an MBE.	3
COM SRB: I was the first Chair of the first Single Regeneration Budget programme, though I had had a few years experience in chairing the Community Partnership and had done a lot of the workshops with the Partnership Forum to get the 20:20 vision. The only Single Regeneration Budget round we didn't win was SRB3. I was the only natural chair in the group and brought learning from City Partnership then went onto the Training and Enterprise Council Board. I am now Chair of Governors of a 6 <sup>th</sup> form college and a member of the City Partnership and now Chair of the Local Strategic Partnership and an ex officio member of the Regeneration Zone.	3
PM CC: Yes there was learning on what kinds of community forum to have – unfortunately they learnt to control them and give them as little power as possible – totally the wrong kind of learning. One or two officers I know did learn about how you get genuine community people involved rather than the self selected few. The high politics of challenge interfered with people stepping back and taking an honest evaluative approach and afterwards there was so much dragging on that I don't think much was done in any formal or systematised way but am sure that some of the officers have used the learning. It was a very valuable and stressful experience – not one I would want to repeat but it did have its benefits later on.	3



<b>Learning criterion 1 continued: Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from an experience.</b>	<b>Score</b>
PM CC: I learnt a lot on the job about how companies work. But from the evaluation itself no. From the experience of the people involved, yes.	<b>2</b>
COU CC: The Council didn't know what it was doing when it went into City Challenge, less than 5% of officers knew what they were doing. Look at the first few years; it could have been politics or history but City Challenge could have just presented an opportunity to sort a few things, there were a few notable people involved but who really understood more than just "we need that money"? It flailed about for a couple of years and there was a danger of it breaking down.	<b>1</b>
COU SRB: A core strand of my business was being the principal manager of environmental regeneration. It was wholly apparent that I was the best person for the role. I have a planning degree and have been in the field of environmental planning with the Council and at Green Street, a forerunner of Groundwork. I had a lot of experience. It was not an alien programme.	<b>1</b>
COM CC: If doing City Challenge again I would build better bridges in the programme. I criticised staff and they took it very personally. I learnt a lot of lessons; governance was not strong, minutes not always accurate, invoices changed. There is a legacy of this now – the Small Business Centre but no one knows what goes on there – one of the saddest things is that the lessons from City Challenge haven't been learnt in the Council it is the same people with no vision moving from department to department. I work with groups across London and they say the same thing.	<b>0</b>
COM SRB: We did fail in SRB1 the worst thing was the failure of community involvement and if anything they did the opposite of community learning. What the Council senior officer said is "forget it we have to move forward". Forget where you have been and forget what you have done and we are moving forward - so for two years we got it completely wrong.	<b>0</b>

<b>Learning criterion 2: Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from reading formal evaluation reports</b>	<b>Score</b>
PM NRF: All my regeneration programmes have been evaluated and I have learnt a lot from them. I do read other evaluations and ask does it work here?	4
COU NDC: Lots of lessons learnt from Geoffrey Fordham Associates and the Goldsmith's University evaluation of Deptford Task Force. They definitely informed me and what happened at City Challenge "a thread runs right through it".	4
GO NDC: Evaluation is being useful partly because of the evaluator concerned. I think the Chief Executive has even commissioned him to do an evaluation of a community development project. People are learning things and acting on the evaluation.	4
COM CC: I read about United States initiatives and wanted them to take place here and thought City Challenge would be a good place to start. I believed the evidence from the United States that it worked.	4
GO NRF: Yes the 21 Policy Action Team reports – they were a stepping stone and a lot of lessons from these were incorporated into the work. We also commissioned a number of evaluation reports from PIEDA etc particularly in this City which had a good track record on Single Regeneration Budget, they had actually done a lot. The Neighbourhood Renewal strategies were also based on former Single Regeneration Budget outcomes. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit have been commissioning evaluation coming out of their ears on New Deal for Communities, Local Strategic Partnerships etc. They are useful as they cut to the chase about what is going on.	4
COM NDC: We get evaluation reports and the Chief Executive is very good. If I want to know something he tells me and I go to the Government Office for London reviews with them. I get books from other regeneration places; they are useful to know what other New Deal for Communities are doing.	3
In bidding for Urban 2 in Stockwell I read extensively the other local and national Urban 1 evaluations – I had good experience of how Objective 2 works as I have seen it for myself in northern France where I live and had all that knowledge when I wrote the bid. It was a model example of how to write an informed bid. It is not going to go where I thought it was going but the mid-term evaluation was good it was commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, I was involved in interviews and supplying papers etc.	3
GO NDC: No, I think evaluation has always been recognised but wasn't as high on the agenda as it is these days. It is carried out nationally by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, it is much more important now than ever was.	2



<b>Learning criterion 2 continued</b>	<b>Score</b>
GO NDC: Don't know, I think that the Single Regeneration Budget evaluation was too wide and done in a general way. Most of us just couldn't be bothered, but it would have been taken seriously and in-depth by those that make policy. From my point of view, even though I want to learn lessons, I am implementing policy not really designing it. . .	<b>2</b>
PM SRB: Ours was one of the first to shut down (most were 7 years) so relatively few comparisons were available.	<b>1</b>
COU CC: The City Challenge evaluation data couldn't be interrogated for over-claiming etc. If you didn't know what had happened you wouldn't really have learned much. It was quantitative and qualitative but the qualitative interviews were dumbed down a bit.	<b>1</b>
COM SRB: I don't recall seeing an evaluation report from another Single Regeneration Budget programme but it was helter skelter running a business and doing evening meetings etc.	<b>0</b>
PM CC: I don't think so, they went straight into the drawer, there may have been one or two bits that we picked up but I don't recall them so probably there weren't. Other City Challenges' reports were accessed by colleagues.	<b>0</b>

<b>Learning criterion 3: Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from informal discussions etc.</b>	<b>Score</b>
GO NRF: Yes, there were lots of opportunities to talk about the programme the whole atmosphere at the time was stimulating you to learn from one another even though most of us were experienced across programmes. Yes we learnt as the programmes all evolve from each other and a lot of folk had involvement across the interface between programmes	<b>4</b>
COM NDC: Deptford City Challenge had been through a lot, I had friends that used to follow them around, when you listen to them you find that the money just disappears. The only thing they got was a little traffic island out there.	<b>3</b>
GO NDC: Yes I was on a team with colleagues involved in Tower Hamlets and West Ham New Deal for Communities and I worked with colleagues involved from day one. We appreciated the differences, for example; New Deal for Communities was meant to be for residents and it was hoped the local authority would be kept at arms length but it was soon realised that local authority has to help to get things done, be Accountable Body etc. They had to do a lot more than when New Deal for Communities was envisaged.	<b>3</b>
PM SRB: Seminars could be good learning but informal learning from discussions with colleagues etc was better.	<b>2</b>

<b>Learning criterion 4: Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from formal training, workshops etc.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COU NRF: Once appointed to the post of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Manager I chose then to work with Neighbourhood Renewal Networks. At the beginning of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Pathfinder I got involved in workshop type exchanges with other Pathfinders which were very useful.	<b>4</b>
GO NDC: The parent department, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, were very good at running courses and seminars even now we still have some shared with New Deal for Communities staff and some other Government Office staff from other regeneration programmes. A lot of networking goes on, we are particularly lucky in London because we have such a vast chunk of New Deal for Communities we have a good team here, as London has such a big chunk of the money it is necessary to have good back up We have a Government Office for London skills, knowledge etc team in addition to the one at Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. We have all sorts of backup there is a team dealing with community matters, one for the Local Strategic Partnerships which need a lot of back-up. There is now a network for Local Strategic Partnerships where there is a chat room to swap problems and ideas but Government Offices have been doing this for years and it works. I use the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit Knowledge Management System where necessary, but because we have a support unit here we tend to use them.	<b>4</b>
COM SRB: We had numerous workshops with the City Council and the Executive Team and this was important for the community representatives once they joined. The training seemed to work and we stayed together as a team over the years. The Chief Executive talked to other Single Regeneration Budget programmes and we went to the Government Office for annual review and get feedback from other areas. Geoffrey Fordham Associates used to talk to us and facilitate the sessions, he was our evaluator and was helping us learn as we go along. It was the equivalent of a Neighbourhood Renewal improvement plan. There was no one else we could talk with about the Single Regeneration Budget (as we were in the first round), we had a mentor from the Government Office and had breakfasts in the Moat House and he was very good to us. He was the North Staffordshire Government Office representative.	<b>3</b>



<b>Learning criterion 4 continued: Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from formal training, workshops etc.</b>	<b>Score</b>
PM SRB: The Government Office arranged seminars for programme teams particularly on arcane subjects such monitoring. I went to a lot of these (partly because they kept changing rules) and met a lot of other teams there. They could be good learning but informal learning from discussions with colleagues etc was better. However it was useful in trying to get work to the standard that the Government Office wanted. I went to Advantage West Midlands seminars, also other programmes in North Staffordshire. We set up a Chief Executives' group and also arranged seminars for project leaders to get groups of people from different programmes in North Staffordshire to share experience and break into small groups some times with all the Programme Officers, Finance Officers etc. Sometimes this was just a grumbling shop sometimes it was very useful. It was more useful in the early days but as time went by we helped other teams set up and learn from us. This started with SRB2, at the beginning we were all learning from each other and after a while we got more confident in what we were doing – less learning and more saying this is how we did it – we thought as we were Round One we knew better and these were upstarts coming along.	<b>3</b>
COM NDC: If you go to conferences and so on you meet different people and go around ask questions and they are dying to tell you.	<b>3</b>
PM SRB: I had a lot of learning through discussions with our contact at the Government Office. We relied on him to help us through the process of bidding. We were a bit unhappy about having to rely on the Government Office, wary of some of the advice he gave us. On the whole he was very helpful and the bid worked but he didn't always give straight answers. The dilemma is having to get knowledge from the funder but he was under pressure to produce high quality bids.	<b>3</b>

<b>Learning criterion 5: Expressing the view that they have learnt from visiting other programmes.</b>	<b>Score</b>
PM CC: We went and saw City Action Teams and learnt from them, one of the Civil Servants helped us work on the bid for while and gave us inside information on what was likely to be needed.	4
IP I looked at evaluations of other programmes particularly London, I rang around other programmes to find out what was going on and how much it was costing other Councils.	4
COU SRB: Through contacts I did get in touch with regional bodies but also I did contact Liverpool and St Helens over a particularly challenging project. I went and looked at best practice in St Helens which was post bid approval but in project formulation. There was programme management training during the programme but not project development. We were really all learning on the question of projects. I discussed with other programmes (for example; Wolverhampton). I went to Huddersfield and linked with another project, I felt that the community needed to go and make liaisons at grass roots and learn some harsh lessons. The Government Office was always averse to risk. Both the community and I learnt lessons from the visits particularly from the project leaders and the difficulties of sustaining community initiatives – these were the risks – we saw good projects that were evolving and failing. The real lessons we were learning helped us for example; you have to get youth involvement.	4
COM NDC: When I went to (a study visit in) Cornwall (they came here too) that was fantastic we spent two days in a hotel. It showed how in the whole of Cornwall they take a little money and build a mountain. You are surprised to see what they can do without fifty million pounds, they are just small places but they make it work because they do it together.	4
COM CC: The Commission for Racial Equality ran a programme sending people on study visits called 'BME Women in Business'. We looked at the different legislative framework in Los Angeles and Washington, how Universities got involved. Positive action being taken black employees being trained up. This was a good way of fostering contacts. I thought we could try this here.	4
COM CC: Yes I went to look at Aston, Deptford, and Dalston City Challenges. The Deptford one was a model that I liked, run by Joe Montgomery who had gained experience in the Inner City Programme and had built up political support. He went on to the national Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.	4



<b>Learning criterion 5 continued: Expressing the view that they have learnt from visiting other programmes.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COU NDC: We visited Aylesbury and Shoreditch New Deal for Communities and organised a trip for officers and residents to see what the community had done organically in Cornwall. We learnt a lot from this, the other New Deal for Communities programmes were just complaining.	<b>3</b>
PM SRB: We went to visit a couple of City Challenge teams to get an impression of scale type/difficulties that was useful.	<b>3</b>
PM CC: Yes we spoke to Joe Montgomery at Deptford as they were a Pathfinder. We had a meeting to share experience with them but we came back feeling dejected as they were 100% with it, in a team all employed by the council etc. The Pathfinder process was not really useful we didn't have enough to do with them and they very quickly became just part of the network and we were all learning at roughly the same level there was a London network of five City Challenges.	<b>3</b>
COM SRB: I have got the reports from Housing Market Renewal areas in Barnsley, Oldham and places like that. You might as well take a template and just apply it everywhere. In Barnsley they are knocking down perfectly good houses - they have mixed up decimation with regeneration. We are in touch with these communities and I belong to a local group and we are having a web-site and got in touch with people in Oldham at the meeting with North Staffordshire Renew. One resident quoted a report that had come down from another programme and he was immediately highlighted as a trouble maker having read the reports in Barnsley. I have seen reports weeks after that that named him as a militant.	<b>3</b>
GO CC: City Challenge was a United States idea based on involving the private sector in partnership. Only the Regional Director was involved in it until it became policy.	<b>1</b>

<b>Learning criterion 6: Expressing the view that learning has transferred from one programme to the next.</b>	<b>Score</b>
PM NRF: The New Commitment to Renewal learning was relevant to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.	4
PM SRB: No, we were working in the dark. With the Round One Single Regeneration Budget the person leading had worked on City Challenge so had some experience but there was the sense of not knowing what we were doing. Since then I have learnt and used the learning. I was project leader faced with evaluation and monitoring from other Single Regeneration Budget programmes. I was forced to see the other side and now have sympathy for project leaders. It meant that I could understand the processes and how to apply for funding etc. When I applied for funding from the European Union it was a complicated form and I had learnt how to do it thoroughly and clearly. I would like to think that from my experience of the programme team I was better at doing this.	4
COM SRB: Community involvement in this scheme wasn't what it ought to be there was voluntary sector involvement but not community involvement. One of the outputs of the Single Regeneration Budget was the creation of residents' associations. That was a weakness, things are much better now; it is a totally different world. There has been very strong learning, community involvement is big business now.	4
PM CC: The Council is still learning in the Single Regeneration Budget (for example with the South Bank streetscape project).	4
COU CC: City Challenge also led to a pilot with the Association of Town Centre Managers (which has been mainstreamed as well as becoming part of the NRF) as it highlighted the town centre as an issue. The pilot was the point at which I got involved in the company.	4
COM NRF: I had been involved in Hulme and Moss-side regeneration programmes. A friend was Vicar of Hulme and had watched communities being torn apart in the name of regeneration and it struck me that we were re-enacting the sixties and hadn't learnt anything from the sixties. Regeneration should be about giving people a sense of life, I felt and I still feel that what happened here (Single Regeneration Budget One) has not paid due respect to the people. Consultation procedures are middle class manipulative, non-consulting and excluding. Did any learning come from the Single Regeneration Budget? I am impressed with the new concept of the regeneration areas in the city and even more impressed with Super Output Areas. The principles, I agree, would not work in the north but here we have very little poverty. The way we have handled Weston; I have been very impressed, the consultation was much tighter and response is more personal.	4



<b>Learning criterion 6 continued: Expressing the view that learning has transferred from one programme to the next.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COM: NRF Because the Local Strategic Partnership is much more locally focussed and also it is not outside money anymore (crucial), it is bent spend more or less genuinely coming out of the local purse, it makes people much more cautious. It makes voluntary contributions much more valuable. I think there is a greater chance of it working. In the Single Regeneration Budget it was the same as in Manchester; there was tremendous waste in trying to spend money every quarter and the Local Strategic Partnership will not have the plethora of, and obsession with, performance monitoring.	4
GO CC: We did a before and after study of how successful the Carnaby Street regeneration/pedestrianisation was and lessons were learnt re opening hours, delivery hours and other matters. This was an early version of the Coin Street led works on the South Bank (Single Regeneration Budget) and helped us prepare for that. It was not the same programme but the fairly low grade analysis we had done on the Carnaby Street Scheme helped with avoiding problems at Coin Street. No lessons were learnt from City Challenge as it was declared a success before the analysis had begun. The partnership approach was considered a success and the use of Community Forums, though lessons were learnt about dealing with local authorities.	4
COM SRB: As result of the City Partnership Forum we had developed a vision and a lot of practitioners had attended too. They had experience of urban regeneration but not of the type of sophisticated regeneration we have now with data gathering and community involvement. I have learnt a lot since. I am now putting this into practice professionally doing community involvement projects. I think many evaluations focus on the things that you haven't done like newspapers have to put the bad news on the front page. The fact that we could give grants to the Council and not the private sector caused a lot of resentment – the Housing Market Renewal initiative will deal with this.	4
GO NDC: We lost the Single Regeneration Budget half way through round six to the London Development Agency. Lessons are being carried forward, though when New Deal for Communities came along people had trouble differentiating between Single Regeneration Budget programmes and New Deal for Communities (for example; in Delivery Plans). The big lesson was the thing about community involvement – everything that we do community involvement is now top of the agenda. We are now very aware that we have to have residents with us and take into account their views.	4
COU CC: I don't think that any lessons have been learnt in our New Deal for Communities from City Challenge. The authority didn't think at all about what it wanted to do itself. The whole New Deal for Communities thing was led by local people/councillors rather than what the Council wants to do structurally.	0

<b>Learning criterion 6 continued: Expressing the view that learning has transferred from one programme to the next.</b>	<b>Score</b>
GO CC: City Challenge was partly to address the deficiency of the Urban Programme in terms of partnerships. It was felt that the Urban Programme was better funded and better targeted towards the inner city crisis but the Government was sick of working through “loony left” Councils. The Urban Programme was assessed hierarchically and the decision was made at higher meetings without any practitioners present. We had meetings of our Grade 7s and then it was passed up the hierarchy but it did not promote learning.	<b>3</b>
COM CC: I have taken forward lessons from City Challenge to the Kings College Hospital Board which I am now on.	<b>3</b>
GO NDC: We were aware of the wish for New Deal for Communities to be different but not to lose the good things that came out of previous programmes particularly Housing Action Trusts which prided themselves on being the first complete regeneration model. There was much good work but when they were wound up the publicity was limited as nobody forgot that it was the brainchild of a previous government. I get the impression that nobody wants to hear about the Housing Action Trusts even though they were brilliant. They were very expensive and there is no point in shouting from the rooftops about things that can't be replicated. Few ministers have spread the word about Housing Action Trusts. You just managed to persuade one minister how good they were and then he disappeared to another job. Lessons are being transferred not just by me but also the people that worked on the Housing Action Trust, consultants, residents etc.	<b>3</b>
PM CC: In some areas there was learning from City Challenge to Single Regeneration Budget but the Council as a whole didn't learn anything other than don't do it again.	<b>2</b>
COM SRB: No I didn't visit other places because this was the first one - we didn't have other models. Overall the Single Regeneration Budget programmes have changed and now in the last one they have got to have community involvement but today we have North Staffordshire RENEW this should be community led and bottom up but it is in danger of being another top down one. That is a lesson that people have learnt.	<b>2</b>
COM NRF: There was no admission that it was bad here – it was not evaluated but a key councillor did admit they had got it wrong. With Single Regeneration Budget 6 the Council has learnt not to be led by politicians from this. It is much more locally rooted. I am cynical and say it is more by accident than by a learning curve. Any evaluation that was done on SRB2 was never in the public realm I read little bits in The Echo and hear various things. I suspect now that I would get it as partnership member I now get all the documents and read them all end to end.	<b>1</b>



<b>Learning criterion 7: Expressing the view that the subject has undertaken learning of their own.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COU CC: I joined the Institute of Economic Development (IED) as I thought it was needed for my own Continuous Professional Development; I felt the employer wouldn't do it. I volunteered and set up a good network among the Boroughs. By the time that City Challenge came to an end I had come into contact with a very wide range of different professional groups who were still struggling with the new regeneration programmes. I am also now at a national level working alongside the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit looking at how urban problems deal with conflict. A few of us get together for a jolly around the country a couple of times a year. Representatives of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister come as individuals. A lot of these kinds of things happen because of the lack of understanding of how things work; there is a lot of learning from these people. On the London-wide London Development Agency body and Central London forum we share problems in jokey kind of ways, we give ourselves scars "another name for learning".	<b>4</b>
PM NRF: I get email alerts and go into the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit web-site when I have time.	<b>3</b>
GO NDC: We use email alerts (to exchange knowledge).	<b>3</b>
COU CC: On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being very useful) I would say 3-4, it is useful because unless you are checking you can't assess progress, otherwise how do you know, this is how I work; evaluation as testing, reassurance and moving forward.	<b>3</b>
PM SRB: We had to keep in touch with things generally and I did an MBA which was relevant because of work on strategies.	<b>2</b>
GO NRF: There is no doubt that since this government got in they clearly want to focus at the most basic ward level and evaluation is increasingly important and this is reflected in the amount of evaluation undertaken now.	<b>2</b>

<b>Learning criterion 8: Feelings on the benefits of evaluation.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COU SRB: I think it is the most overlooked item within planning and regeneration. Monitoring can be done by an accountant but evaluation can't. This Single Regeneration Budget evaluation was the most important of all the Single Regeneration Budget evaluations. More was learnt from this evaluation than SRB2. It was a ground breaker at the time. Evaluation can hold programmes to account provided independent review is done but they have got to come back to be scrutinised once done because there has got to be lessons learnt from an independent review. When you read a report you can say; this is where we went wrong provided it comes back to us, but this hasn't happened as often as it should and as well as it should. If there is a bad report somewhere it will get buried.	<b>4</b>
PM CC: It would have helped but you have not only got to get the evaluation results coming out of a process but you have also got to have a process to take the lessons in. We had a strategy group but it only met twice, that's where the evaluation should have fed in. When we did tendering for the evaluation that was one of the aims; a feedback cycle but for the first two years we got nothing and then it was coming in too late for our cycle. You were already well into the programme but not yet constructing the next years cycle. We probably referred to it but I don't recall using it in any detail.	<b>1</b>
PM NRF: I am not sure of the benefits; it makes more sense to evaluate the City's performance as a whole. I am not sure that any evaluations have helped in a precise way. I am worried that we shouldn't try and know everything as programme manager; either we trust them or we don't.	<b>1</b>
COU CC: If you look at the last 10 years; the White Paper on cities; the whole of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and then the Audit Commission report on Economic Development, I can't see any lessons coming out of it. There are lots of ideas in them but a lot of regeneration expertise could have told them this in advance. If you are lucky the one lesson you get from evaluation is that I'll never do that again.	<b>1</b>
GO NDC: People locally were wondering about why local people weren't doing it instead of consultants. They did try to employ local people but it didn't work.	<b>0</b>
GO NRF: Sometimes consultants are engaged by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit but after a large investment you could have written down their findings before the exercise started. It could be the terms of reference but sometimes what you get is so obvious, mostly you do get key recommendations but it is a kind of mixed bag. Looking back most evaluation is useful but the odd one isn't.	<b>0</b>



<b>Learning criterion 9: Negative experiences of evaluation.</b>	<b>Score</b>
PM CC: Yes there was learning on what kinds of community forum to have. Unfortunately they learnt to control them and give them as little power as possible. This was totally the wrong kind of learning. The high politics of challenge interfered with people stepping back and taking an honest evaluative approach. I don't think much was done in any formal or systematised way but am sure that some of the officers have used the learning.	4
GO NDC: I don't know, I think the Single Regeneration Budget evaluation was too wide, done in a general way, most of us just couldn't be bothered but it would have been taken seriously and in-depth by those that created the Single Regeneration Budget programme.	2
GO NDC: The first evaluation was done at a time of great turmoil. The Government Office for London came out badly. It said that our intervention resulted in destabilisation of the board. This was very damning and based on just a comment from one person but later reports have been so realistic and so helpful as they have seen what they are trying to do and given them credit for this. Paul Comfrey was from SQW unlike the first person who was too academic, Paul has been a councillor in Islington, and he's got a real grasp.	2
PM SRB: At the mid point sub-group chairs did it (the evaluation) and with hindsight this was not a good idea, the mid point was really too late to make any changes in a five year programme. Steering Group chairs didn't do very well, some were quite open and others were more protective. I would hate to use the word methodology, some with more experience used a more thorough type of appraisal. Others like the police were less thorough and more protective. Towards the end we were finding shortfalls and the mid-term evaluation was the start of the process of trying to get back to the targets. Even though the Government Office accepted changes to the programme the final evaluation was still based on the original targets.	1
PM CC: The journalistic one was sent to all contacts. We never saw the national one as it came out a long time after we had finished. We never saw the final South Bank one as we had gone by then, it went to the Council, I think, to the Director and was then buried away on a Committee agenda.	1
COM NDC: At the estate you don't see the wardens at all. Here they sent out an evaluation for what they are doing, it was a good outcome, people said they are doing a fantastic job. I have seen them walking about but never see them in action. How did they get a good evaluation when people like you know what is going on and they are not doing well? They should get some one-else to do the evaluation – the community should do the evaluation. Is it the same with other projects they get good evaluations but in reality they are not good?	1

<b>Learning criterion 9 continued:</b>	<b>Score</b>
COM NRF: The first evaluation of voluntary and community sector involvement was somebody from Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. I didn't have an input to the terms of reference. There were lots of boxes and questions in civil service speak provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. We had an awful row, she barely got it through. It should have been a whole day but we reduced it to a half day and thought it was a waste of time. We did it again and got through it in half an hour answering convoluted questions at the behest of some guy who doesn't know what we are doing.	<b>1</b>
COM CC: In the second year the South Bank University got an evaluation contract. I was interviewed by South Bank University but there were only one or two views that dissented from the agenda. The Chief Executive had selected the Board members one by one, most were too shy or too scared or didn't have the confidence. This was looking at progress against baselines, the indicators used were wrong and the results included double counting.	<b>1</b>
PM CC: Yes the South Bank annual evaluation. We employed them from the beginning to run a 5 year programme which had been well worked out including a base-line exercise which they did do.	<b>1</b>
PM NRF: The cost and time taken.	<b>0</b>
PM SRB: We commissioned Staffordshire University to do baseline work and it was atrocious so we never paid for it. Some of the baseline figures in the bid were ropey not detailed or robust enough. We also asked the college to do some work with various media on how things have changed but that came to nothing perhaps we could have done more, for example; before and after videos.	<b>0</b>
PM CC: The evaluation was not very useful, there was never a point when we could sit down with them with facts and figures and make decisions. We just didn't do it and the evaluations didn't encourage us to do this. They were really a separate exercise, the amount of money was too low (came out the admin costs that were too low due to match funding coming in). The University were poor and so with the amount of funds they got it didn't enable a proper evaluation. We discussed this with one of the senior evaluation officers in the pub. He said: we just need to produce bullshit and get paid and maybe squeeze a couple of academic papers out of it.	<b>0</b>
COU CC: Yes they do help but the reader has to understand what they are reading. The City Challenge evaluation was outrageous and poor came out two years after the programme ended and was published two years after we had all moved on.	<b>0</b>
COM NRF: I read 80 pages of the first evaluation in Langley (Single Regeneration Budget) although I lived in the middle of it I wouldn't recognise what it was saying from my experience and that of my neighbours.	<b>0</b>



Learning criterion 9 continued:	Score
<p>COM NRF: We had a woman come in to find out how much we valued the partnership. We scored ourselves very lowly and she drove the scores up. The evaluation didn't inform anything, too much paper is around for anyone to take notice of it. I find that kind of evaluation very frustrating, nothing comes out of it. The whole thing is about good intentions for delivery. I have not in my engagement with the Local Strategic Partnership seen any good evaluation. She came to a Local Strategic Partnership meeting and said only 14 of you have filled them in. She went through the responses and she read out confidential answers that could be recognised – I was absolutely livid, why should you value something when people embarrass you like that?</p>	0
<p>GO CC: There was an annual analysis with the Chief Executive and the Council which was “fixed” every year and believed by Civil Servants who thought it was vastly better because the programme was being monitored. There were 30 plus measures and anybody could fiddle the system playing fast and loose with metres of footpath or road width or acres of open space. There were opportunities for straight double counting. When it was assessed within Government Office for London they (Chief Executive and the Government Office contact) had put in smiley and droopy faces. That was all that was evaluated it went to Permanent Secretary then Ministerial meetings considered performance. If there was no output to be achieved we would put a smiley face down. We didn't break the rules but were flexible with them. The independent evaluation was not commissioned till after 5 years. The evaluation decisions were made at HQ using old boy networks and then it was tendered.</p>	0
<p>PM CC: It is difficult as there was so much that was negative. Things that I found personally bad experience; the supposed results of evaluation at project level was a haranguing match by management, the “Star Chamber”, more like an inquisition than evaluation. We didn't use evaluation to shut down projects. We only shut one down and we were all threatened by the project leader.</p>	0
<p>PM CC: The evaluators were supposed to come and take all our monitoring information and see if they could see any impact. Generally they were poor, sloppy and last minute, the report would come in nine months late and didn't really tell a great deal there were just facts and figures (mainly provided by us) and very little analysis. They were going to provide match funding in the form of soft analysis videos, photography etc and they did almost none of this. Most of them were our figures in the first place but they did put a lot of anecdotal stuff from the community for which they got into trouble. If we had been in a less bunkered down position we could have learnt from some of this. Every year they would present to the Board who would say what a load of rubbish and send it back and only to eventually agree to renew them.</p>	0

<b>Learning criterion 10: Good experiences of evaluation.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COM SRB: Geoffrey Fordham Associates assessed the process, presented to us, did the workshops which built up towards the final evaluation and they helped to present it to the community. Yes it was a process before the end and afterwards. Geoffrey Fordham Associates were with us for the final year we went into a sixth year and the final year we made sure we could hand over. They presented it to the Board and we presented to the community and buried one in a time capsule. It has still taken three years for the Local Strategic Partnership to get really high quality baseline data it has been a nightmare but I have got it. I was definitely more aware of this issue on the Local Strategic Partnership because of Single Regeneration Budget experience.	<b>5</b>
GO NDC: Some good examples are the current New Deal for Communities evaluation. It is very satisfying to read a report that understands their problems. He had ten key points written in very down to earth language, for example; make more friends. I don't generally read other New Deal for Communities reports but my colleagues do and we talk a lot in the office about evaluations and have a lot of seminars with people doing the evaluations.	<b>4</b>
COM NRF: I did some work for Richmond Fellowship and every two years we would do evaluation work in depth. It probably prevented me from leaving the job. It took place away from the city with really skilled people and it really worked. There is nothing remotely like that now.	<b>4</b>
GO NRF: The City Council has now set up a centralised team. The Local Strategic Partnership are monitoring and reviewing this. All this is beginning to work its way through as real time evaluation. For once in my life I didn't have to bang the evaluation drum.	<b>3</b>
PM SRB: Our Single Regeneration Budget programme has a poor reputation but I don't agree with this so it is good that we have the independent evaluation to point to.	<b>2</b>
COU SRB: I can remember lots of programme evaluation. I always got the impression that the programme team was competent and doing good evaluation.	<b>2</b>



<b>Learning criterion 11: Evaluation in life outside regeneration programmes.</b>	<b>Score</b>
COU NDC: Part of me thinks that it was useful but another part of me gets frustrated that you can't do anything without evaluation. For example, in current meetings with Government Office for London/the Department of Health/Primary Care Trust they don't want to commit without more studies and statistics. I felt that they wanted to use it to prove that what we were doing wasn't working. The wording they were using suggested an intellectual debate about numbers remote from the sort of indicators suggested by a resident – how long it takes to fix drain covers (which is dismissed as “anecdotal”).	<b>0</b>
PM SRB: Evaluation has been quite useful in affording me an appreciation of the discipline of how to do things properly and realise the benefits of doing something you don't really want to do.	<b>3</b>
GO NDC: Difficult really, depends what you mean by <u>evaluation</u> ; there is evaluation by consultants or staff and there is personal evaluation that you do without doing it consciously. Regarding formal evaluation I am very much not a policy maker so I am just carrying out the latest rules for this programme. However, just because of where I am located I need to know that the projects that we have funded do have a good result.	<b>2</b>
GO NRF: It is a key operational tool, unless you understand how well or how poorly things are going you can't progress. I would put all my money on evaluation unless you do it you are working in a vacuum, you can't find the wood for the trees, you don't know what is happening. Also, we get asked questions by Members of Parliament in the House of Commons you have got to have an answer. You might make it up occasionally but you have to have strong robust evaluation or you will never know where you are. The evaluation of key outcomes from strategies which are good, bad, or indifferent are important. No one is saying “that is wrong” you need to learn.	<b>4</b>
<b>Learning criterion 12: Using Pathfinder/pilot programmes to learn from.</b>	<b>Score</b>
PM NRF: I learnt from the New Commitment to Renewal Pathfinder also from running evaluative trials with Neighbourhood Renewal Fund projects.	<b>4</b>
PM CC: Yes, spoke to Joe Montgomery at Deptford as they were a Pathfinder. I had a meeting to share experience with them. The Pathfinder process was not really useful, we didn't have enough to do with them and they very quickly became just part of the network and we were all learning at roughly the same level there was a London network of five City Challenges.	<b>2</b>

## **7.9 Conclusions from the stakeholder interviews.**

### **7.9.1 Process criteria:**

#### **1) Having read evaluation documentation.**

On the basic question as to what extent evaluation reports are read there is some limited evidence that practitioners have read and used evaluation in their work but this is sparse and has to be considered alongside the scepticism expressed about evaluation reports.

#### **2) Having taken part in formal training, workshops, networking etc.**

It is clear that formal training has been used quite extensively by most stakeholders with workshops and seminars being popular, often for the “network” effect rather than the formal content. Networking has also been used as a powerful tool by a range of officers and in many cases this has included visits to other programmes. One to one support particularly by Government Officers seems to have been useful indeed Government Offices regarded their role as including passing on lessons, advice, guidance, and signposting.

#### **3) Having taken part in informal discussions e-groups or visited other programmes to learn.**

There is some evidence of officers using networks to achieve learning and support (in at least one case this involved retreating to the pub as a team as a survival method). Informal learning such as these, even at formal events seems to have been as important as formal learning.



#### **4) Having considerable experience.**

Interviewees brought a remarkable array of experience to the regeneration programmes and there is evidence that considerable learning is transferred as a result of this.

#### **5) Having used evaluation and produced dissemination materials.**

The evidence from the case studies confirms the findings of the theory and desk studies which show that evaluation has many uses and transferring learning is only one of them. There were two examples of where evaluation materials were produced specifically for dissemination. It is interesting that both these examples are defensive ones. The programmes produced them so that despite the prevailing negative thoughts about the programmes in some quarters the positive version would be on the record. In one case an entirely journalistic “evaluation” was produced and disseminated and in another case a CD-rom was made. However both programmes suffered from deficiencies in the baseline and evaluation up to that point so probably could not show the full picture. The general state seems to be that evaluation reports are produced as written reports, quite often now placed on the internet, but not pro-actively disseminated.

### **7.9.2 Learning criteria:**

#### **1) Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from an experience.**

There is a considerable number of people who feel that they have learnt from experience of earlier programmes and knowledge of an area. In a number of cases the subject felt that they had been selected for a regeneration role primarily because they had had experience on previous programmes. However, in one case the experience of one programme had been so bad that the lesson learnt was never to do it again.

## **2) Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from reading formal evaluation reports.**

There was some limited evidence of people feeling that they had really learnt from evaluation reports however there was a general scepticism about the usefulness in practice of these reports. In some cases this is because of the timing issue, in some cases it was feeling that the evaluation might not be too relevant or measuring the wrong thing. In once case the officer felt that the evaluation reports were mainly of use to policy makers and not to her in her implementation role. There were also examples of evaluation reports that were perceived as being of poor quality and an overwhelming feeling that practitioners were too busy. It cannot be said that there is much evidence of learning from reading formal evaluation reports.

## **3) Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from informal discussions etc.**

Informal discussions have played a limited but important role in transferring learning.

## **4) Expressing the view that the subject has learnt from formal training, workshops etc.**

Training events and seminars have been found a useful way of learning though there was no evidence that these were used to transfer learning - rather they seemed to be operationally focussed on the new programmes.

## **5) Expressing the view that they have learnt from visiting other programmes.**

This has been found to be a useful tool by many practitioners and community representatives and probably is one of the most important ways in which learning is transferred both across programmes and within programmes.



**6) Expressing the view that the subject has transferred learning from one programme to the next.**

There are very mixed views about this with some people suggesting that they think that learning has been transferred and others being clear that it has not. It seems that the transfer may be of a more general experience, stakeholders carried their experiences, good and bad, onto the next programme and felt that it did influence them.

**7) Expressing the view that the subject has undertaken learning of their own and has used on-line resources to learn.**

A number of interviewees have undertaken studies to help them in their careers but in only one case this was an urban regeneration qualification and that was taken before getting the urban regeneration post. There are limited examples of the use of on-line resources to learn but this is not surprising given that the much of the period in question pre-dates widespread use of the internet and on-line resources such as regen.net.

**8) Feelings on the benefits of evaluation.**

Few respondents were able to give very positive feelings on the overall benefits of evaluation in their experience. However there was a recognition that was necessary and potentially useful. Some 'good' and 'bad' examples were given. 'Good' evaluation seems to be characterised by being timely, relevant and conducted by a good individual or team. 'Bad' evaluation seems to involve incomplete work, irrelevant briefs and, being too late for the programme in question and in at least one case, a barrier to getting decisions made.

### **9) Negative experiences of evaluation.**

There were an undercurrent of bad feeling about evaluation in many of the interviews and this was supported by many examples of apparently poor practice.

### **10) Good experiences of evaluation.**

Interviewees were able to point to a range of evaluations that had been good experiences in whole or in part but when set against the negative experiences this still leaves a very mixed picture.

### **11) Evaluation in life outside regeneration programmes.**

Balancing good and bad experiences interviewees were able to point to the general importance of evaluation if only it could be done well.

### **12) Using pilot/pathfinder programmes to learn from**

There was a strong example of where there had been learning from a New Commitment to Renewal Pathfinder but this turned out to be more relevant for mainstreaming. The same person also used Neighbourhood Renewal Fund funding to trial approaches as active live evaluation projects.

## **7.9. 3 Summary findings from the stakeholder research**

The principal finding from the stakeholder research is that there is evidence of the transfer of learning from one programme to the next. This has occurred mainly through personal and career routes, networking visits and workshops. Formal evaluation reports have played a limited role.



**Table Twenty: Summarised findings by criteria**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<b>1) Evidence of learning from reading evaluation documentation</b>	Evaluation reports have not featured highly in the transfer of learning from one programme to the next. There was some limited evidence of people feeling that they had really learnt from evaluation reports however there was a general scepticism about the usefulness of evaluation reports
<b>2) Evidence of learning from participation in training, workshops, networking and similar activities.</b>	There is evidence that formal and informal mechanisms have been used to inform programmes and programme leaders and that the prevalence of these has increased with more recent programmes.
<b>3) Evidence of bringing personal experience and learning to the programme.</b>	There is evidence that key actors in regeneration throughout the study period have brought a great deal of experience with them, many times this has been their only preparation. All respondents had valuable experience of one form or another
<b>4) Evidence of application of evaluation to a range of uses.</b>	There is evidence of a wide variety of uses for regeneration including public relations, closing projects down, learning what works, and allocating resources.
<b>5) Evidence of learning by visiting other programmes.</b>	Learning from visits to other programmes has been an important feature to a greater or lesser extent in all the case studies
<b>6) Evidence of barriers to lessons being learnt from evaluation.</b>	It is clear that many of the key actors in the case studies have experienced some very poor quality evaluation work and practices.
<b>7) Evidence of experiences of evaluation that succeed in transferring learning.</b>	There have clearly been good evaluation experiences that make it work for many people but there is a need to learn what works in evaluation and learn from it to counter-balance the considerable negative experiences.
<b>8) Expressing the view that the subject has transferred learning from one programme to the next.</b>	There is evidence that learning does transfer between programmes quite apart from any from any evaluation reports or training events. A key theme being community involvement, however the learning was not always evidenced by changed activity.
<b>9) Evidence that evaluation is valued as a learning tool.</b>	There is a belief held by many that evaluation is a beneficial process but the way (and by whom) that it is done and is reported is crucial.
<b>10) Evidence of learning from pathfinders.</b>	There is limited evidence that pathfinders or pilots were useful for learning in this sample. This may be because the Single Regeneration Budget, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and City Challenge programmes were all Round One.
<b>11) Evidence that practice has changed as a result of transfer of learning from one programme to the next.</b>	Many of the interviewees were able to give some examples of where they had actually changed practice and it is possible to conclude that, in a limited sense learning does transfer between programmes

### **7.10 Evidence that practice has changed as a result of transfer of learning from one programme to the next.**

This section gives a summary of specific examples of transfer of learning between programmes that were established during the stakeholder interviews and subsequently by means of a follow-up email question and interviews.

From a Single Regeneration Budget programme manager:

I have learnt (from the Single Regeneration Budget) and used the learning; my job has changed (now under the English Partnerships Coalfields Programme). I was the project leader faced with evaluation and monitoring from other Single Regeneration Budget programmes. I was forced to see the other side and now have sympathy for project leaders. This meant that I could understand the processes and how to apply for funding etc. (for example; when I applied for funding from the European Union it was a complicated form and I had learnt how to do it thoroughly and clearly) I would like to think that from my experience of the program team I was better at doing this (PM SRB – Table 21 above).

From a Government Office official:

We lost Single Regeneration Budgets half way through Round Six to the London Development Agency – lessons are being carried forward though. When New Deal for Communities came along people had trouble differentiating between Single Regeneration Budget and New Deal for Communities, for example; in Delivery plans. The big lesson was the thing about community involvement – in everything that we do community involvement is now top of the agenda, for example; in housing we don't just deal with council officers but also with residents groups. We are very aware that we have to have residents with us and



take into account their views. The big lesson that has come out through all these programmes is real community involvement. Lessons are being transferred not just by me but also the people that worked on the Housing Action Trust, consultants, residents etc (GO NDC – Table 21 above).

The community leader involved in Single Regeneration Budget said that he had learnt that community involvement was the key thing and that they are now actively challenging the current programme (Housing Market Renewal) to have effective community involvement including by getting reports of schemes elsewhere. He feels that they have learnt lessons but the new people coming into Housing Market Renewal haven't. In this example the learning has stayed with the community but new officers have come in who haven't had that learning. This has proved very frustrating.

The New Deal for Communities Chief Executive said:

Yes, discussions with people that had run previous programmes helped, they were very useful in deciding to take the New Deal for Communities job and avoid pitfalls. I read Single Regeneration Budget evaluations as part of MA studies and did extensive reading around the theory of urban policy altogether. Yes, I learnt lessons from these; it is difficult to disaggregate evaluation reports in particular from the rest of the MA studies, but it did help a great deal (PM NDC Table 21 above).

The private sector Chair of a Single Regeneration Budget also felt that his experience on previous programmes helped him:

I brought learning from City Partnership then went onto Training and Enterprise Council Board....I have learnt a lot since. I am now putting this into practice professionally doing community involvement projects. The fact that we could give grants to Council housing and not the private sector caused a lot of resentment – in the Housing Market

Renewal initiative we will deal with this concern and will be able to give out private sector grants (CO SRB Table 21 above).

As with others he learnt from the Single Regeneration Budget experience that establishing decent baseline figures was a priority and he has made it such: “It has still taken 3 years for the Local Strategic Partnership to get really high quality baseline data – been a nightmare but I have got it. I was definitely more aware of this issue on the Local Strategic Partnership because of Single Regeneration Budget experience” (CO SRB Table 21 above).

A Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Manager felt that they had learnt from past programmes and had made structural changes as a result:

Does anybody learn from mistakes - yes, the City learnt heavily from the New Commitment to Regeneration which informed the Local Strategic Partnership and is now learning from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund which will inform the Community Strategy. The rationale for the Community Regeneration Division was to bring together the learning from SRB2 & 6 and NDC (COU NRF Table 21 above).

A Council regeneration manager responsible for Single Regeneration Budget has a number of examples of how he has changed his practice as a result of learning from earlier programmes:

I can think of a number, one was our work on best practice on face-lifting buildings in the Single Regeneration Budget programme. Our approach was a blanket approach to properties treating them the same but this led to a wide range of problems arising after the projects were approved. In all future programmes face-lifting has been done in a different way and will be with the Housing Market Renewal work. We now appoint a technical person to work with each property from the



beginning and deal with the likely problems right from the pre-application stage (COU SRB Table 21 above).

He also felt that they had learnt “lots of lessons” in working in parks and open spaces, for example; work on public art.

With projects along the canal you would think “win win” but a lot of harsh lessons were learnt. Things are still referred to between agencies and organisations in the community, in fact this led to the setting up of a permanent way of doing these projects which was an agency called “Green-street” and is now called “Groundwork”(COU SRB Table 21 above).

He also stated that the Council completely changed its approach to area-based initiatives as a result of experience in the early Single Regeneration Budget programmes:

Some communities for example; Middleport, say they were drastically harmed by being on the other side of the boundary. The first Single Regeneration Budget programme turned the Council against tight fitting Single Regeneration Budgets. We have now been successful in getting our SRB5 - the biggest in country with no boundaries (COU SRB Table 21 above).

One Council regeneration manager felt that some lessons were learnt and others were not. He had personally acted to put in place a regime to address the problems of earlier programmes:

In some areas there was learning from City Challenge to Single Regeneration Budget but the Council as a whole didn't learn anything other than don't do it again. The Council is still learning in the Single Regeneration Budget (for example; the problems with the South Bank streetscape project). I did learn about issues to do with unemployment access to jobs, bringing in partners such as training agencies – we

offered a lot and delivered a lot. Our supplementary programme did learn from the City Challenge programme and I put in place a discipline which we never had before.

We had learnt things from Urban 1 that we wanted to try in Urban 2 but the rules wouldn't let us (for example; asset transfers). We had learnt but the Government hadn't. (COU SRB Table 21 above).

However since the interview there has been a declaration that Urban 2 might support asset transfers, so this learning will probably be translated into practice.

A Government Officer was convinced that learning is currently transferring into new forms of practice from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to the Local Area Agreements regime:

On the basis of the lessons learnt from Single Regeneration Budget I would say yes. The Regeneration Executive is already thinking about Local Area Agreements and what is next will be totally different. We have two pilots one in Brighton and one in Kent that are running at the moment (GO NRF Table 21 above).

A community leader learnt from a United States programme and applied it in a United Kingdom City Challenge programme, she has also since moved on to a Non-Executive Director post on an National Health Service Hospital Board:

I read about United States initiatives and wanted them to take place here; I thought City Challenge would be a good place to start. I believed the evidence from the United States that it worked. The Commission for Racial Equality ran a programme sending people on study visits (BME Women in Business) I looked at the different legislative framework in Los Angeles and Washington and how Universities got involved. A key was positive action being taken to get



black employees trained up. I thought we could try this here. I have also taken forward lessons from City Challenge to the Kings College Hospital Board which I am now on (COM CC Table 21 above).

A Government Office official had acquired lessons from an even earlier programme – the Greater London Council led the Carnaby Street regeneration/pedestrianisation:

We did a “before and after” study of how successful it was and lessons were learnt concerning opening hours, delivery hours etc. This was an early version of the Coin Street led works on the South Bank Single Regeneration Budget programme and helped prepare for that. The fairly low grade analysis we had done on the Carnaby St Scheme helped with avoiding problems at Coin Street (GO CC Table 21 above).

A City Challenge programme manager had a more equivocal view:

Yes there was learning on what kinds of community forum to have (unfortunately they learnt to control them and give them as little power as possible) - totally the wrong kind of learning. One or two officers I know did learn about how you get genuine community people involved rather than the self selected few. I don't think much was done in any formal or systematised way but am sure that some of the officers have used the learning (PM CC Table 21 above).

A community leader felt that she had learnt both from an earlier local programme and also from another project and since then she has been scrutinising her New Deal for Communities programme as a Board Member much more:

We went on a best practice trip to Cornwall and learnt about how a little money is applied to go a long way and now watch this in the New Deal for Communities. My friends had followed Deptford City Challenge around and made me realise that you need to watch these

programmes as residents to make sure you see some results for the money (COM NDC Table 21 above).

A community leader feels that the City Partnership had learnt from earlier programmes not to have a political lead running Single Regeneration Budget programmes.

However he wasn't sure if they had realised that they learnt the lesson. There was no admission that it was bad here – it was not evaluated but a key councillor did admit they had got it wrong and that in SRB6 they learnt not to be led by politicians from SRB2. It is much more locally rooted. I am cynical and say it was more by accident than by a learning curve (COM NRF Table 21 above).

## **7. 11 Analysis of findings.**

### **(a) Positive evidence that learning has taken place.**

This research has been able to establish that learning has taken place by virtue of individual examples of actual changes in practice put forward by stakeholders. Analysis of these examples suggests that much of it results from individuals carrying forward learning in their own careers.

### **(b) The paucity of evidence of the effectiveness of formal evaluations.**

Some respondents had read formal evaluation reports from previous programmes before embarking on new programmes and a number of them had looked at the in-programme evaluations of their programme. In the earlier cases (City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget) it is clear that community respondents had not even seen the evaluation reports that they had contributed to and were not clear what had happened to them. There was no case where evidence was offered that a practitioner had learnt from reading an evaluation (or other) report and then changed their practice.



This finding might suggest that scrutiny is needed of the effectiveness of the investment in evaluation activity, if it leads mainly to the production of reports. It would seem that a pro-active approach is needed to ensure that the findings are disseminated and applied. Evaluation reports do serve multiple purposes and a Government Officer explained that evaluation reports are designed to influence policy whereas she was involved in practice so does not use them. This appears to be a very limiting definition of the use of evaluation as very few practitioners make policy but very many are practicing.

**(c) The strength of the other learning activities at all levels.**

A wide range of interventions were felt to be effective including visits, events, and networking. In many cases these were orchestrated for practitioners but in a number of cases practitioners set up their own networks

**(d) Cases where learning is lost.**

There is some evidence of where learning could have taken place but did not for different reasons. In one case the Government Officer was aware of what she thought was a good evaluation report of the Housing Action Trusts programme (DETR 2000d) but she still felt that “if transfer happened it was only because of staff that worked on both models, there was a paper written but I am not sure it was used to its full extent”. She explained that officers were positively discouraged from showcasing the lessons from Housing Action Trusts because they had been developed by a previous administration.

She also felt that they were played down, even though they were believed to be highly successful because of the financial consequences – their success was partly predicated on there being a large supply of money, the amount of which was needed could not be known in advance. There was therefore a high risk politically, so, even though there were lessons to be learnt these were played down.

In another case a community representative had been told to forget his experience: “We did fail in SRB1, the worst thing was the failure of community involvement, and if anything, they did the opposite of community learning. What the Council senior officer said is “forget it we have to move forward. Forget where you have been and forget what you have done - we are moving forward”. That stakeholder also reported that more recently, one community representative got into trouble for trying to transfer learning: “he quoted a report that had come down from another programme and he was immediately highlighted as a trouble maker. I have seen reports weeks after that that named him as a militant” (COM SRB: Table 21 above).

These may be isolated examples and more research would be needed to properly understand how widely lessons learnt become lost like this. Another negative outcome which was documented was the case of City Challenge where two separate stakeholders stated that the lessons they had learnt were negative in one case the lesson was “don’t do a programme like this again” and in the other case it was learning how to control community members on the Board.

These examples may be one-off examples but they illustrate a more strategic point: If the bulk of learning is to be by these ad hoc means then there is a danger of learning taking place outside an accepted framework of values. For example, practitioners have learnt how to react to problems with community involvement whereas perhaps the learning that they needed was how to proactively improve community involvement?

The lack of formal urban regeneration qualifications was an important finding. The prevalence of self teaching is an important finding. Only one interviewee stated that they had a “regeneration” qualification. Interviewees were encouraged to be as broad as possible in considering whether they had such a qualification for example any related multi-disciplinary qualification would have been accepted for the purposes of this research. It is not surprising that this is the case because stakeholders all had worked across programmes and therefore would have been active in regeneration for some



years before “urban regeneration” qualifications became common. Interviewees had obtained qualifications that were relevant to them, for example; MBA and Economic Development.

### **7.12 Synthesis of other evidence.**

At this stage it is appropriate to bring in other evidence. In 2005 the national interim evaluation of the New Deal for Communities programme was published (NRU 2005) and this also indicates that even though the New Deal for Communities programmes have not made as much of the (learning from) the New Deal for Communities experience as they might but there is some increasing evidence of learning as the programme develops:

There has been less positive change in relation to learning and innovation: the depth and quality of the evidence base relating to neighbourhood renewal has improved, partly because of lessons learnt from the Programme. Partnerships are also generally more aware of the need routinely to embed interventions in the evidence base. However, the Programme has not been as innovative as it might have been. Some Partnerships still tend to be somewhat introverted. And LSPs and others could be more imaginative in using NDCs to pilot and evaluate innovations: it is too often seen by the wider renewal community as ‘just another ABI’ (NRU 2005: xxiv).

In particular, the study found that the number of New Deal for Communities partnerships that felt they had both learnt and changed the way their projects ran had increased from 25 in 2003 to 35 in 2004. Similarly, there was felt to be an increase in programmes being changed as a result of learning from 15 to over 30. The total number of partnerships was 59. This evidence shows an encouraging trend but given that learning from practice is an expectation of all New Deal for Communities partnerships it could also be regarded a matter of serious concern that so many partnerships (almost half) do not feel that they learning is leading to change in their projects and programmes.

On the question of longer term learning it also seems unfortunate that, in considering the skills and experience gap facing those charged with delivering the Sustainable Communities programme, that it was found by a recent study that: “It is regrettable that the experience gathered when the post-war new towns were developed seems to have been lost. There would be value in revisiting the methods used to deliver the new town in order to avoid repeating the mistakes which have resulted in unsustainable communities” (BURA 2005c: 15).

### **7.13 Conclusions.**

A clear difference has emerged over time with evaluation and learning having been poorly regarded and felt to be inadequate in the earliest programme and becoming more prevalent and more valued in later programmes. The evidence is that in City Challenge evaluation work was undertaken late, not very well, and not seen by most of those involved. In one case another form of learning transfer was helpful but this was the use of an initiative external to urban regeneration (the Scarman Trust). Individuals did carry forward the learning or “scars” from City Challenge but not in any structured way.

In the Single Regeneration Budget case study there was more evidence of pro-active attempts to learn from the past but most formal learning was about the complex new processes and not substantial learning about content from earlier programmes. Indeed in the case study there was no transfer from City Challenge partly because of the geography and partly because the City Challenge national evaluation was so late in being produced. In the New Deal for Communities case study there is much more evidence of both formal and informal transfer of learning and all the participants had developed a personal history of various programmes. However in the case of learning from the Housing Action Trusts, which were regarded by the



Government Office as successful learning, transfer was restricted for political and financial reasons.

In the case of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund analysis and learning was far more routine and was being linked directly to structures and resources and there is also a feeling developing that learning needs to be on the performance of the City as a whole rather than just on individual programmes like Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Finally, going beyond the case studies there is some evidence that one of the most recent regimes the Housing Market Renewal Initiatives may be repeating the mistakes of the past “mixing up decimation with regeneration” as one respondent called it and horizontally transferring a template of housing clearance from other areas rather than learning from the rich history of local programmes and people. Ironically the very communities that had their “capacity built” as a result of learning about community engagement in earlier programmes are now being labelled as “militants” for pointing out the dangers of repeating the errors of the slum clearance programme.

This is one of a number of examples of mixed speed learning, that is; different stakeholders emerging with different lessons at different times or perhaps of outsiders coming in to an area and ignoring the learning that has become embedded in the area. Either way it highlights the hazards of the dependence on individuals and informal structures to transfer learning.

Much of the above refers to transfers of learning about implementing regeneration rather than inputting into devising new programmes. In the stakeholder research there was little evidence offered that stakeholders feed their learning into the design of programmes. An example of this was the private sector chair who had learnt about the importance of baseline data from the Single Regeneration Budget and made sure that they got it right in setting up the Single Regeneration Budget. Another example was the Government Office official who felt that individual officers and consultants took forward learning from the Housing Action Trusts into New Deal for Communities.

There are very limited examples of stakeholder transfer to the design of the next programme. This is likely to be because of the divide between policy people and practitioners mentioned by a Government officer above. It is perhaps a pitfall of the reliance on informal learning as the policy makers may not be exposed to these lessons? Nevertheless the Case Studies have given cause for guarded optimism about the conditions for and prevalence of learning transfer between evaluation programmes.

The findings of the case studies in this Chapter are synthesised with the findings of the documentary analysis in Chapter Six and Theory in Chapters Four and Five to draw conclusions in Chapter Eight below.



## **Chapter Eight – Conclusions.**

### **8.1 Introduction.**

This Chapter encapsulates the key findings of this study and brings together the evidence to reach some conclusions. It reflects on how the main contextual drivers for change have affected the subject and comments on what has arisen from the evidence gathered by documentary analysis of the major evaluation programmes of the study period. This shows that formal evaluation work was undertaken on all these programmes and that the search for lessons learned has been a constant throughout this period. This analysis shows how, over time, evaluation reports have become less confirmatory, legitimising, intensively audit and target driven and more pluralist/stakeholder (Aaronovitch in Townley and Wilks-Heeg 1999: 27-41). Evaluation can no longer be regarded as a value-free exercise being undertaken by professionals for professionals. It is now regarded as essential for effective management (because of governance changes) and evaluation needs to serve many audiences in a charged and ever-changing political and policy environment.

This Chapter addresses the hypothesis by concluding that over time the conditions for the transfer of learning have been increasingly in place. Indeed there are detectable eras through which evaluation has operated and, over time, practice has changed to meet the demands of each era. There is therefore much room for confusion about what evaluation's role is at different points in time and at different levels in the regeneration process. This research finds that it is important that the purpose and procedures for evaluation and transfer of learning should be made explicit from the beginning.

This chapter also highlights that learning is taking place in many ways and at many levels, only one of which (and not necessarily the most effective) being the formal process of evaluation and dissemination. It concludes that the

increasing emphasis on learning can be traced to changes in governance, greater partnership working, competitive bidding, and a general move towards empowering communities and increasing the skills, knowledge, and capacity of the many players in modern urban regeneration. There is also the question of the move of accountability from top-down government-led programmes to a more shared picture of local implementation of national set programme. These changes all lead in one direction only, that is: towards greater learning. Finally the Chapter considers how evaluation and the transfer of learning from it might develop and suggests the need for a national framework

## **8.2 The changing roles of evaluation.**

A theme running through this research has been the concept of eras or periods of regeneration. Urban policy has been a fast changing and highly contested arena and the notion that the learning aspects of it can simply be value-free academic or scientific exercises has quite possibly left much of the potential learning untapped. Ho (2003: 16-29) suggests that the first attempt to really learn about the conditions in the poorest areas (and understand how effective urban policy responses were) was the Community Development Programme. The results of this were unpalatable to the Government and the learning was not welcomed by the Government as the lessons were raising challenges that went well beyond the work of the Community Development Programmes initiative (Ho 2003: 16-29).

After this evaluators were generally not allowed to set their own questions and themes of study and evaluation was to briefs laid down by the programme funder and commissioner (usually the Government Department). The role that evaluation played therefore changed over time. This study has shown how evaluation remained until recent years the principal tool of learning transfer but has faced many tensions due to the problems of being generally commissioned by the funders. Evaluation was often not relevant enough or too late to be of value to the stakeholders.



The second age which Ho describes as the Age of Dissent (1980s) where consultants were reporting more on the inputs and outputs and margins of operations which she describes as “fine tuning” than on the substance of the programme or the conditions in the area (Ho 2003: 24). She states that “output driven evaluation was only a manifestation of government ideology.” She also suggests that the Government confused performance monitoring with evaluation of policy impacts. This focus on performance measures attracted much criticism from contemporary writers (See Chapter Six).

There was a considerable body of scepticism during this “age of dissent” as to the application and usefulness of evaluation. However, this was to change as the Government’s approach to evaluation evolved as the Conservative Government moved from a physical and economically dominated approach to more partnership, community and social approaches. This created another driver for change which was the need for learning to transfer across a horizontal audience of stakeholders with widely varying views and intentions. When evaluation was directed by government for government it was fairly clear why it was being undertaken, what the policies of the commissioning body were and what it was meant to influence but now evaluation was expected to serve many audiences and many competing centres of power.

Evaluation faced another crisis with the emergence of external partnership-led regeneration where these bodies were led on business principles at arms length from government and for the first time information that would otherwise have been publicly reported could be deemed to be commercially sensitive (for example; Urban Development Corporations) and as this study has reported there was great criticism of the lack of accountability and failure to publish (and in some cases undertake) evaluation. Learning was thus lost and so was innocence (Ho: 16-29). Evaluation again was recognised as being a tool that could be used or dropped at the will of the potential evaluand. Perhaps the most important aspect of this is that it emphasised how partial learning transfer might be. If programmes can choose to only evaluate or publish those aspects of their history and performance that suits them how

can others ever judge what works? In a discussion of this study with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005, evaluation managers stated that they were doing some work on this aspect of attempting to have a system that verifies good practice.

Another aspect of the loss of innocence is the commercialisation of evaluation. Evaluations have always been undertaken with external partners involved and usually these have been appropriate public funded bodies such as Universities (which are also accountable to the public for their standards). However, increasingly evaluation is undertaken by private sector firms who depend on a stream of contracts to survive. There is therefore always going to be a risk that these organisations perceive that if their evaluations are unfavourable they may not get further contracts.

This risk is heightened by the competitive funding regimes that have been established since City Challenge. Interviewees in this research openly admitted that they would use evaluation results to close down projects. Yet the results are based principally on information supplied (or not supplied) by the commissioners of the project (who in some cases seem to have already made up their mind) and the evaluands who want to continue funding and keep their jobs and reputations. This study has shown clearly how the supply of information and its use (for example; as indicators) is not a neutral process.

This study has found that there are many other factors that suggest that formal evaluations have been subject to weaknesses that make the transfer of learning unlikely in some cases. These are detailed in Chapter Five and summarised in this Table Twenty One:



**Table Twenty One: Weaknesses in evaluation practice from theory (summarised from Chapter Five):**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor quality, non-existent, or selective use of information.</li><li>• The difficulty faced by evaluators when the programme objectives are not clearly stated.</li><li>• Changes in the basis of programmes over time have been found to frustrate evaluation.</li><li>• Conceptual conundrums feature highly.</li><li>• The timing of evaluations in relation to the programme itself and any future programmes it is meant to inform.</li><li>• The problems associated with the use of indicators to assess performance.</li><li>• Lack of engagement of stakeholders in earlier evaluations.</li><li>• Little evidence, in earlier work that evaluation was intended to be disseminated and used for transfer of learning.</li><li>• Resistance from evaluands.</li></ul>
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The chronology of regeneration programmes (Chapter Six) demonstrates how the timing of programmes means that learning was unlikely on the basis of evaluation reports alone.

**Table Twenty Two: The overlapping phases of regeneration since World War Two (summarised from Chapter Four).**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Post-war rebuilding efforts.</li><li>• Community as the focus of policy the first time round.</li><li>• Partnership between Central Government and local.</li><li>• The rise of the European dimension.</li><li>• Partnership with private sector.</li><li>• A return towards community and layering of governance.</li><li>• Government and Governmentality.</li><li>• Statutory and permanent partnerships and mainstreaming.</li><li>• The increasing value placed on targets and evidence driven practice.</li></ul>
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Added urgency is given by the continued drive towards new localism by the current Labour Government as set out in Chapter Four. As the British Urban Regeneration Association (2005c: 10) explains, this agenda has been accelerating with recent Government pronouncements on a ten year vision for local government, Citizen Engagement, Local leadership and Local Area Agreements. For New Localism to work there must be meaningful learning transfer both vertically and horizontally.

Major growth pressures from the Government's Sustainable Communities programme and the Thames Gateway and Olympic initiatives increase the risk of ill-informed decision-making as the Head of Community Investment of Springboard Housing Association recently warned: "we are at risk of repeating mistakes that were made in the 1960s and 70s (in Thames Gateway)" (Mackechnie-Jarvis 2004: 7).

What is clear is that the evaluation is not neutral or value-free, it is commissioned and informed principally by those with a stake in the decision (at least at programme or project level). It is also constrained by its terms of reference which are set by the commissioners. It therefore has to come to an independent judgement in a situation where the parameters have been set by those with a stake in the results.

This conundrum is likely to be a permanent state of affairs as any move to reduce competition or de-commercialise evaluation work would meet the alternative criticism that evaluation was being kept in-house and was no longer independent. Possible solutions could be to establish an arms length body to evaluate urban policy such as the Healthcare Commission which examines the performance of the National Health Service. However experience in the National Health Service has been that these arms length bodies themselves are subject to political vagaries and the constant threat (and reality) of re-organisations, abolitions and change in terms of reference.



This chapter considers below how some recent initiatives may help to structurally address this conundrum. This research suggests that an essential building block (given that there may be no system without pitfalls) is to ensure that the purpose and procedures for evaluation and transfer of learning should be made explicit from the beginning.

### **8.3 The purpose and procedures for evaluation and transfer of learning should be made explicit from beginning.**

This research has found that both the purposes of evaluation and the definitions of urban regeneration are manifold and widely varied, simple statements such as “backing what works” or a reliance on “evidence based practice” belie the complexity of the situation. To understand what works it is necessary to agree on what it is that is trying to be achieved. It is clear that in many areas different stakeholders are trying to achieve different things so “what works” for one group may not work for another.

This research has shown how the expectations and demands on evaluation have evolved over the decades and it is unsurprising that this has led to confusion about the roles of evaluation. From the brief period when evaluation was intended to be for genuinely academic discovery (the Community Development Programmes) through the eras of top-down centrally commissioned evaluations (typified by the Inner City Research Programme reports reviewed in Chapter Six) to the turn again to the community of the New Labour Governments, the purpose and procedures of evaluation have had to reflect the changes in government and management styles.

However, much deeper than this has been the underlying shift in forms of governance and the move from Government run programmes through to the late 1970s and 1980s “partnerships” between Central and local government to the wider partnerships of City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget and more recently the Local Strategic Partnerships and neighbourhood

management initiatives. As reported in Chapter Four there is a body of thought that identifies a move from “government” to “governmentality”. This is a transfer of responsibility for identifying and sorting out urban problems from Central Government to the localities. This has exposed both weaknesses and new urgency in urban regeneration evaluation work. Up until recently evaluation was largely based on performance against government set targets and processes. In all the programmes reviewed in Chapter Six it was clear what the targets were and what the procedures were to address them. Evaluation tended to be measuring success against those programme and project targets. With the emergence of new forms of localised governance and implementation evaluation has had to respond to different and often unclear demands. These are exemplified by the potential and actual clashes between the targets set by the centre in the Public Service Agreements and Local Area Agreements and the expectation that local partnerships will analyse local problems and prioritise resources and actions locally. Evaluators have to judge performance in situations where programmes effectively have multiple masters. They also have had to operate increasingly in situations where there are numerous over-lapping urban regeneration initiatives and the power of any one authority or actor to control things on their own is dissipated.

The emergence of New Labour’s new localism (and as Stoker (2004: 7) defines it “Networked Community Governance”) with a belief that local people know best how to rebuild their communities has caused this dilemma to assume very great practical importance. This is best illustrated in the New Deal for Communities programme where a very local community is heavily targeted with resources and given the time and resources to develop its own view as to what works. The government has found this a frustrating exercise as they want these areas to spend money and deliver outputs within targets so that they can show progress on the political front. This does not allow for the possibility that what communities have learnt is that good regeneration takes time and cannot be switched on and off in accordance with funding targets. In the same way evaluation of the New Deal for Communities is being conducted on an annual basis but the real results may not be apparent for 20



years. Therefore it would appear that any successful evaluation would need three key elements:

1) Agreement as to what the programme (or collection of interventions) was intended to achieve, that is: what would be accepted as a “good outcome”. This may well have to be a combination of the expectations of different players and funders.

2) A clear statement as to the purpose of the evaluation. Is it purely for learning and if so what are the consequences to those involved of a “bad” evaluation? How realistic is it that people will freely tell the world how they failed in a project? For professionals it may be just their careers and pride at stake but for those in communities they may have to admit to their critics and those they defeated to get their way that they failed. As communities increasingly take the lead the price of exposure is higher because residents stay and have to live with the consequences. It seems essential that these pressures and realities are externalised in any evaluation study as a health warning on the nature of the data and therefore the conclusions.

3) An ethical framework within which evaluation can be commissioned and conducted. In particular this would need to deal with the key question: Who is to commission and control evaluation and the subsequent dissemination?

At one end of the scale is the question that Scriven (1991) asks: is good being done? The search for the answer to this question raises some important issues. Is the search for some sort of societal gain rather than check-listing performance against process or targets? As McCollam and White (1993) emphasise; it is a higher activity than simply a process of measurement or checking. However herein a dilemma lies – what if good is being done but the programme is failing in its own terms? Can an evaluation make the judgement that a programme hasn’t met its targets but has still achieved a great deal of good? The Industrial and Commercial Improvement Area programme is such an example (DOE 1983a - reported in Chapter Six above).

The UK Evaluation Society has produced guidelines for evaluators that seek to deal with the ethical and professional standards. The first of these (UK Evaluation Society 2003) is that the evaluator should make the aims, objectives, and purposes of the evaluation clear to everyone involved. Little reference has been found in this research to the problems posed by the ethics of evaluation.

The next section of these conclusions proposes a national framework for evaluation. It would be hoped that within that framework ethical issues can be tackled perhaps with leadership by the National Academy for Sustainable Communities (or regional centres of excellence) in evaluation, learning, and good practice?

#### **8.4 The need for a National Evaluation and learning framework.**

The biggest single stumbling block to the recruitment of staff, according to about a third of responding recruitment consultants is job applicants' lack of experience and understanding in the regeneration sector (Lindsay 2004: 18-25).

This statement underlines the urgency for transfer of learning. This research has found that evaluation as the key transfer of learning tool has probably been underused and where it has been used its use has been patchy and inconsistent. Ho (2003) reviews the key critics including Barnekov *et al* (1990 pvii), Stewart (1990: 135) and Lawless (1989: 168) all of whom emphasis the importance of evaluation but which lead her to summarise the situation as “generally speaking, the overall impression provided by the critics is that evaluation is a wasted effort”. This is detailed by Higgins *et al* (1983: 169) who argue that “if any single lesson emerges clearly from the account of successive inner-city policies it is the failure to learn from and apply experience gained at each stage”. Lawless reinforces this by proposing that the monitoring and evaluation of urban policy did not lead to modifications of policy nor result in large scale policy review. Burton and



Boddy described evaluation having had “little impact....in a fundamentally flawed policy approach” (Burton and Boddy 1995: 23-36).

The above criticisms have been borne out by this study and beg the question what is the future to be for evaluation? Is practice to simply continue stumbling from era to era with lessons being widely disregarded and under-utilised or is the future going to be more optimistic than the past?

Evaluation takes place at many levels and for many purposes, in the same way that urban regeneration programmes have proliferated with local, regional, national and even international programmes evaluations have developed to reflect these. For many programmes (for example; New Deal for Communities) there are local and national evaluations, in some cases all commissioned from the centre but in more recent cases; the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, for example, commissioned centrally for the national programme and locally for each area. Within this complexity there is the opportunity to build in transparent roles for the different roles and types of evaluation. It should be possible to construct a framework for evaluation and accountability which clearly shows how and where each stakeholder's concerns are to be addressed.

This study has found that there is an increasing institutional and community acceptance and appreciation of the need for evaluation and a rise in its perceived importance. It therefore seems crucial that a national evaluation framework is established that addresses the pressing need for effective evaluations and transfer of learning. This research has identified from theory some key drivers or reasons for this. The first reason is the general rise in the practice of social sciences which paralleled the development of urban policy generally. The second reason is the emergence of new ways of working - urban regeneration has been at the heart of experimentation with new ways of working – evaluating the methods and effects may be considered to be additionally important.

A third reason for the rise in the importance of evaluation has been the realisation among many theorists and some policy makers that evaluations of programmes were sometimes imprecise and unhelpful in their scope and the extent to which they inform policy. Therefore more effort and priority should be given to their preparation. A fourth reason is the increasing spend on urban regeneration by a wide range of non-traditional bodies. The fifth consideration is the introduction of the competitive element. For those writing bids and those deciding on funding allocations some sort of accepted evaluation of which programmes are likely to be successful is vital.

A sixth reason is that evaluation has become increasingly important in terms of process issues as well as project or programme outcomes. A seventh reason is the lack of understanding of the problems and issues in the areas concerned. A further concern is that evaluation is undertaken at a considerable cost, if it is not being applied effectively it would be poor expenditure of public resources. There is also the reduction in the reliance on the experience and training of civil servants and other professionals which makes some other mechanism for agreeing “what works” essential. It seems that there is need for a national framework which might be structured as shown in Table Twenty Two below. This study suggests that an evaluation framework would need to:

- Operate at the appropriate levels of decision making from national through to local projects.
- Operate to explicit purposes and standards.
- If funding is at stake operate to high standards of openness.
- When real learning is being sought allow for a framework of anonymity or confidentiality but still, where possible share results.
- Create a climate where failure is regarded as good learning and de-link the consequences of evaluation people’s careers and reputations.
- Address the ethics of evaluation.
- Address the information burdens and challenges of evaluation.
- Create structures for determining if evaluation is effectively utilised.
- Create procedures for dissemination which are clear and proactive.



**Table Twenty Three: A proposed National evaluation framework**

<b>Function.</b>	<b>Prime purpose.</b>	<b>Organisations to undertake role.</b>
National scheme level.	To inform the government as to progress and let all those involved know high level lessons without having to attach blame to individual programmes. To enable all evaluation bodies meet agreed standards for accreditation.	Consortia of Universities and/or consultancies. IDEA may have a role.
Public interest reports.	To examine matters of governance or effectiveness as part of public accountability and themes that cut across public policy such as value for money. To ensure that each delivery body has a learning and evaluation plan in place. To ensure that only accredited evaluators are used unless there is good reason.	Audit Commission.
Programme level funder commissioned performance evaluations.	To audit if the funding is delivering to expectations and apply the learning to funding decisions. These evaluations would be open and accountable with the evidence in the public domain. General anonymised lessons from these evaluations could be shared with other programmes.	Universities and/or consultancies.
Programme level and programme commissioned learning evaluations.	These evaluations would set aside considerations of future funding and looked at what can be learnt about strengths and weaknesses. In some cases it may be important, that at least for the lifetime of the programme that they are kept confidential but it should be possible for many of them to be published and shared.	This could be a function of in-house independent evaluators or Universities and/or consultancies.
Project performance evaluations by funding programme.	To audit if the funding is delivering to expectations and apply the learning to funding decisions. These evaluations would be open and accountable with the evidence in the public domain. General anonymised lessons from these evaluations could be shared with other projects.	Local independent evaluators or consultants there would be scope for involving stakeholders such as programme staff in conducting these evaluations.
Project learning evaluations commissioned by the project.	These could be similar to the programme learning evaluations above.	As above but these could also involve resident-led evaluation work.
To ensure an ethical approach to evaluation, suitably educated and qualified teams and exchange of good practice.	These institutions would work to oversee or influence evaluations to try to overcome some of the questions about independence and quality of evaluations. A possibility would be that the academies could be responsible for certification of evaluation practitioners, institutions, or even evaluation work itself.	National or regional academies of evaluation, learning, ethics and good practice and National Audit Office. The UK Evaluation Institute could have a key.

Much evidence has been gathered of the burden of data collection and the effects that this can have on the way that evaluation is regarded and utilised. It would seem that as long as (monitoring and) evaluation is seen as a wasteful bureaucratic process it will not have the utilisation necessary for learning to transfer. Ho (2003: 211-2) has called for a strategic integration of information collection and usage which would link vertical (national and local evaluation data) as well as horizontal (across service providers and the Local Strategic Partnership) data. This approach may well be effective but consideration may also need to be given to the opposite approach – of reducing the amount of routine data collected and concentrating only on what is needed for learning.

Finally, how will researchers and managers in future be able to judge if evaluation has been successfully utilised? There is a spectrum of views on the standards which represent the degree to which evaluation results were utilised by policy makers (Knott and Wildavsky 1980: 537-78). This spectrum allows for “enlightenment” (Weiss 1990: 214-35) to be considered a successful utilisation of evaluation. This test has a much lower threshold than Patton’s tests as used in this research (Chapter 3 above) to detect if learning transfer took place. Knott and Wildavsky (1980: 546) allow for “cognition, reference and effort” to count as utilisation of evaluation and this seems more realistic than the stricter Patton tests.

Lindblom (1959) has highlighted how policy change is often incremental and seems to result in a collective “muddling through” or disjointed incrementalism (as he terms it) and therefore the subtle influences that evaluation might have may be just as crucial as the more easily evidenced, directly attributable changes in policy as preferred by Patton. Therefore whoever seeks to document the effectiveness of evaluation may have to work out new ways of evidencing this. This is an important task as for evaluation to be resourced, populated with worthwhile data and used effectively it needs to be seen to be used in policy terms.



Reports to Government Departments can't disseminate themselves. They get buried by a combination of paper overload, staff turnover and competing departmental interests (Wolf 2005: 8).

This statement by Professor Wolf, Professor of Management, and Professional Development in the Department of Management at Kings College London is supported by the findings of this study. A national framework for learning through evaluation needs to address the Civil Service logjam of competing priorities and lengthy agendas. One way may be to secure multiple paths for dissemination and this is beginning to happen through structures such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Knowledge Management System ([www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net)) and [www.londonrenewal.net](http://www.londonrenewal.net) which focuses on London programmes.

### **8.5 Cause for optimism – signs of hope**

This study has produced some cause for optimism. There is a widespread commitment among the main actors in regeneration towards evaluation and learning and there is increasing evidence of learning transfer between programmes albeit much of it informal. A clear lesson is that informal transfer is of great importance and to over-formalise learning transfer would not be the most effective way forward. There is also evidence from the documentary analysis that more recent evaluations explicitly seek to lead to the transfer of learning (for example from the New Commitment to Regeneration to Local Strategic Partnerships).

The emergence of formalised structures such as the regeneration centres of excellence could have led to the formalisation of learning. In fact there are signs that there is recognition that important learning takes place in many forms, formal and informal but it may not be easy to achieve this. Sophie Churchill, the Chief Executive of "Regnum" the West Midlands Centre of Excellence stated: "One of our biggest challenges is to legitimise informal as well as formal learning but underpin it with performance management

systems that ask what people have learnt every quarter” (Dobson 2005: 17). In this way the bridge between formal and informal learning is crossed by putting the informal into a structured framework.

The British Urban Regeneration Association has also established its “GRADE” (Global Regeneration and Development Exchange) programme (BURA 2005a) which has a strand of international visits partly funded by the UK Government (DTI and Scottish Executive) and a “Regeneration Training Programme” run jointly with Coventry University. Participants receive a certificate of attendance for attending one module and a certificate of completion for attending all ten one day units and this can lead into a Post Graduate Certificate in Management (Urban Regeneration) by distance learning. This is following the pattern found to be effective by this study which is to base learning around the experiences of other participants.

The British Urban Regeneration Association (2005b: 1) has also announced that it will be producing an inter-active web-based information exchange to allow practitioners to learn lessons from Best Practice projects and in 2005 it produced its Crystal Awards which involved gathering together the five main lessons from its 15 years of Best Practice Awards (Loney 2005a: 20-22). The British Urban Regeneration Association is also developing trans-national sharing of best practice through the “Eurocities” network and that network now recognises the need to formalise learning processes. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit’s web-site now has a collection of project case studies and each one includes “lessons learnt” ([www.renewal.net/Search.asp](http://www.renewal.net/Search.asp)).

There is also some evidence of the essential nature of learning coming from the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder initiatives. On the face of it this programme seemed to be repeating some of the mistakes of the slum clearance programme (See Chapter Seven). However the New Heartlands Pathfinder has placed great emphasis on the learning. Board Member Roger Driver states: “One of our first tasks was to look at why some (regeneration strategies) had not worked to ensure that we did not make the same mistakes” (ODPM 2005a: 8).



This research has shown that the transfer of learning is increasingly taking place in many ways between urban regeneration programmes and that there is general acceptance that the transfer of learning is an important objective for a wide variety of reasons. However if the past is to be used as a guide there are many challenges faced in trying to ensure that useful learning takes place. Even though a wider range of learning techniques is now in use evaluation and dissemination of the results remains the core method of formal learning and there has been much fluctuation and confusion about the role of evaluation in learning transfer, and indeed on the effects of evaluation altogether on the process and outcomes of urban regeneration.

There is also the question as to who is learning? Bailey (2005: 6) has suggested the process should be one of knowledge exchange rather than simply transfer (which suggests a movement in one direction). For learning to take place and for the results to be implemented in future programmes all levels of stakeholders need to learn; from communities to government.

The evidence from the stakeholder interviews is that learning now increasingly does take place at the level of community representatives and at local authority officer and programme manager level. The structures clearly exist and the discourse of the Government officials suggests that now the Government is learning and putting into practice that learning. From the documentary analysis, reading of theory and the publicly stated intentions of Ministers it is clear that regeneration should now be evidence based and learning driven. However, the evidence is mixed and the contra-indications include the apparent reluctance of ministers to promote and roll-out the lessons from Housing Action Trusts, the consistent rolling out of programmes before the previous ones have been evaluated and the rolling out of programmes such as Neighbourhood Management before there has been time to learn lessons from the Pathfinders.

It is clear from this study that decisions on urban regeneration programmes are very often the result of political imperatives. Even though the civil servants may now learn more, it is likely that this will always have to be balanced in the context of political choices. This leaves evaluators with the ongoing dilemma of needing time to be effective but needing quick results to meet political timetables. The two cannot easily be reconciled and this suggests that great emphasis is needed on a national structured, widely agreed, and non-political evaluation framework (as suggested in Table Twenty Three) so that lessons become cumulatively embedded and accepted over time rather than relying so much on the evaluation of the previous programmes.

Set against these causes for optimism are also the barriers to learning transfer explored in Chapter Five and the reminders from commentators such as Doherty and Horne that a range of ingredients need to be present to facilitate learning including “will, skill, resilience and risk taking” therefore the mere production of an evaluation report may not be sufficient to ensure that learning takes place (Doherty and Horne 2002: 410-453).

## **8.6 Learning is happening but what learning?**

There also needs to be clarity about what regeneration is being sought for an area and why those outcomes are expected to make an area better and not worse. It would be possible to have a highly effective urban regeneration programme that was delivering outcomes that made an area considerably worse in the eyes of local people or in terms, for example, of sustainability. Does there need to be consideration of some sort of moderation or quality control of what is to be learnt? A more important question than “whether people learn?” might be what they learn?



Jarvis cautions that research shows that for the majority of potential learners experience does not readily result in reflective learning, indeed many students dug “the same hole deeper” (Jarvis 1994: 32-43).

As there will always be contestation about what makes for a better community, evaluation and learning perhaps ought to be linked to a local vision, which could be the challenge for the Local Strategic Partnership. The flaw with this is that in reality there can never only be one vision for an area as people have multiple valid realities and expectations. It would perhaps be more democratic for local authorities to be the champions of the community’s visions but they are also hampered by their muddled roles as both service providers and enforcers in the area. Local authorities also need to think in terms of electoral cycles and face the loss of control now resulting from the many changes highlighted in Chapter Four.

The value of both qualitative and quantitative measures needs to be fully recognised, indeed there is much evidence to suggest that quantitative measurement of changes in complex urban systems is inevitably flawed and unreliable. The reliance on “what counts is what can be counted” is quite likely to lead to a continuing downplaying of the belief in, and therefore application of, learning results. There may need to be an acceptance that many things – perhaps some of the most important things cannot be evaluated and that professional judgement, local opinion or a combination of views may make it sufficient to say: ‘lets try this because we think it is will work’?

On a wider scale the Civil Service is adopting a newer approach to learning through the new National School of Government which will be adopting an approach to learning by civil servants that draws from a wide field of expertise in the topic area and there will be more emphasis on the practitioners gaining the relevant external qualifications rather than the erstwhile emphasis on generalist skills (Graham 2005: 16-18).

Universities are also offering a wider range of regeneration courses and have had to tackle the constantly changing nature of urban regeneration. Professor Turok in describing the University of Glasgow's new suite of regeneration courses emphasised that the University has to be aware of the changing political climate but not be driven by it. Instead, he says they are driven by "the fundamental principles of regeneration" which he admits have, themselves changed over the last decade (Redfearn 2005b: 14).

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Skills and Knowledge programme (see section 5.2 above) now offers a suite of learning: The renewal.net website; Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers; the Neighbourhood Renewal Delivery Skills Training Programme; Regional Networks and Flexible budgets for skills and learning. This was evaluated and one of the key findings supports the findings of this research:

Future evaluations must give priority to identifying evidence of learning gains, changes and improvements made and how these track through to improved partnership performance (ODPM 2005c: 3-4).

## **8.7 Conclusions.**

The conclusion must be that the hypothesis has been convincingly disproved. There is evidence of the transfer of learning by a host of formal and informal means and this accords too with the learning theory explored in Chapter Five. The review of learning theory showed that learning takes place when the conditions are right and in all sorts of ways. Urban regeneration has evolved over the study period to embrace a wide range of learning opportunities and it may be useful to look at a before and after analysis of the learning opportunities. The emergence of more pluralist forms of governance in regeneration with the City Challenge programme in 1996 may be identified as a turning point as suggested in Table Twenty Four:



**Table Twenty Four – City Challenge as a watershed in the evolution of evaluation.**

<b>Before City Challenge.</b>	<b>After City Challenge.</b>
Regeneration designed and delivered mainly by a closed set of officials.	Regeneration designed and delivered by a wider group of individuals with more connections into other spheres.
Evaluation was mainly top-down commissioned work undertaken and published in bureaucratic formats.	Evaluation starts to be more locally driven and participative.
Evaluation was mainly about input-output results and value for money.	Evaluation much more about processes, ways of working and stakeholder's views.
Centrally driven models meant that they could be supported by central civil service knowledge and determinism.	Locally driven and widely varying actors means that new ways of devolved learning need to be found.
Belief in national programme solutions that can be applied across diverse local areas.	Acceptance that local solutions are sometimes necessary and can best be found by local people.
Use of monolithic departmental structures to deliver solutions.	Realisation that the structure and process for each different programme and area has to be right for the needs of each area.
Belief in Government solutions.	Belief in Governmentality: local actors can be empowered or forced to deliver the government's aspirations in self sustaining and critical ways.

There has therefore been a transition from a period roughly equated with the emergence of City Challenge in 1996 and multi-sector partnership working when new ways of learning needed to be explored. The evidence is that it is the emergence of new ways of working with a wider involvement of actors from diverse sectors that has opened out learning. Those involved needed to know what were likely to be successful interventions in order to successfully bid for funds and appraise their own actions and the actions of others. Urban regeneration had become competitive and localities had to demonstrate why interventions were likely to work in their areas. Key factors which have contributed to learning include:

- The constantly changing nature of urban regeneration programmes.
- The complexity and target driven nature of programmes.
- Having to deal with new sets of actors.

The constantly changing nature of urban regeneration programmes has led to officers having to constantly learn and relearn ways of operating, of bidding for funds and of justifying what they are doing. However, there is evidence that the timing of these changes has led to learning opportunities being lost, most obviously where the evaluation work of one programme has not been completed before the next programme is designed and up and running. There must also be the suspicion that if officers are constantly having to jettison the present programmes in favour of a new one they never have time to properly reflect on what they are achieving and how best to achieve things.

There must also be the concern that if officers' time is consumed by bidding for, and delivering funded programmes, that many opportunities for improvement are being lost that would not require funding but simply some thoughtfulness about what is being done and why. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the Public Service Agreement targets and the current drive towards Local Area Agreements may be moving more in the direction of a thinking approach to delivering change. Though as these are all target driven they must surely suffer from the numerous weaknesses of targets and indicators as set out in Chapter Six above?

The complexity and target driven nature of programmes is a second driver for officers to learn but also must be a matter of concern. It seems that the more complex the tasks and processes the less time and flexibility was allowed. Programmes like Single Regeneration Budget and City Challenge required strict quarterly deadlines and the ability to project the unknown in detail up to seven years in advance. This is being addressed now by programmes such as New Deal for Communities which allow time for detailed local planning and consultation. Finally one of the most powerful influences for learning for officers has been their having to deal with new sets of actors. In particular working with communities in their new roles such as Board Members has led to much friction and the need to learn and develop new techniques.



The evidence is that the need to learn has become much clearer and community leaders have involved themselves in much learning (often incidental, for example; from neighbours who have been involved in other programmes) and often through their own studies and much more commonly now through visiting other programmes. It is possible to say that there is evidence of an increasing trend towards community transfer of learning between programmes and that this has been encouraged and supported by what may be termed instruments of Governmentality such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Knowledge Networks, Seminars and Best Practice visits all of which have emerged in the post City Challenge era.

This learning is occurring by ad hoc and incidental selection from an increasingly rich “pic ‘n’ mix” of learning opportunities and there has to a query over the veracity of some of the lessons to be learnt. For example the reliance on Best Practice begs many questions. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit warns that: “Much (best practice) is based on a few case studies which can lead to misleading evidence or findings of limited generalisability”(NRU 2006a: 1). A project such as the British Urban Regeneration Association Award winning Gunwharf Quays development in Portsmouth met the Best Practice requirements of one scheme but would it meet Best Practice in terms of preserving town centre shopping, reducing car use or equity and equality? The same could be said for many such schemes – best practice depends on what you have to work with and what you are trying to achieve and in whose interests. It is not an invalid tool but it is one that requires interpretation in use by others.

Katz (2005: 1), who is Vice President and Director of the Metropolitan Cities Programme at the Brookings Institution, supports the use of Best Practice as a way of learning but cautions that “utilising best practice from one area will only lead to success if considered within the context of change and challenges within that particular”. Similarly, learning from officers who admit that they have learnt how to get round communities, “sex-up” performance returns and have undertaken no academic work on the subject may not be the best thing. Or it may be? How is this to be known? Who is to

determine that learning is going to make urban regeneration better or worse? More importantly who is to determine whether the lives of the communities are genuinely improved or made worse?

This research has found that learning in urban regeneration has been a process that is making the transition from narrow and formal to more pluralistic with a richer mixture of formality and informality. In the same way learning is continuing to develop and there are signs that the current picture mix offer may be more rationalised with the emergence of regional centres excellence in regeneration. As an example, RENEW North West (the North West Regional Centre of Excellence) has launched an Exemplar Learning Programme which seeks to structure the learning from “successful or innovative” projects in the region (New Start 2006: 10).

There is also evidence of the emergence of more formalised and accredited community learning courses in urban regeneration. Local Strategic Partnerships too have to demonstrate that they have formal learning programmes in place and other institutions such as ‘IDEA’ are facilitating learning. It is possible to end this research with a positive conclusion. Learning is increasingly taking place and will be transferred between programmes in a range of formal and informal ways. However, there remains a need for the quality and content of the learning to be assured and there is evidence that this is happening to an increasing extent.

## **8.8 The way forward.**

### **8.8.1. Clarity of purpose.**

The use of evaluation appears to be widely undervalued and even regarded with suspicion. This research has found how widely varied the uses and understandings are and how it is underused even when undertaken and the result published. There seems to be a need for clarity and greater ownership of evaluation. Clarity is needed as to why it is being undertaken. Is it a process of checking on performance, on the basis of which decisions will be



made about future funding or is it a genuine learning exercise whereby everyone can admit their mistakes and deficiencies and do better later?

This conundrum does not just apply to projects where there are performance problems because there are also differing perceptions as to what success is. A project may be meeting the community's aims excellently but if the evaluation is on the funder's aims which are different or narrower, or open to a different interpretation, a project could still be threatened by evaluation. The trend towards multi-level evaluation may help address this as different layers of governance can commission evaluation on the subject that suits them.

### **8.8.2 The use of performance measures.**

The use of performance measures is an area where continued attention is needed. Chapter Six described the many practical and conceptual problems with attempts at using indicators of performance and also some examples of where the evaluation measures would not truly show the benefits of a scheme. Chapter Seven also showed how stakeholders have sometimes misused indicators and how little the formal reports from these processes have been used over the years.

One criticism is being addressed increasingly – that the measures are not of utility to those involved in the process and the results are not subsequently applied. As this study was concluding, the use of performance indicators across Government was being reviewed in the light of widespread criticism. In some cases, such as the National Health Service, the Government was promising to reduce the numbers of targets and in other cases such as local authority services Local Area Agreements were being increasingly used to agree targets in partnership.

However, there may be a much larger consequence of decades of target driven urban regeneration: the loss of professional and judgement driven management. In the interviews stakeholders rarely mentioned the use of their

own skills and judgement but constantly mentioned how they had managed (or failed) to follow the rules of the game. There is a danger that regeneration practice simply becomes better at learning and implementing arcane rules and meeting targets set by others which may be doing more harm than good.

Part of this problem is the expectation that regeneration, which needs to be long term, can be undertaken by constantly changing short term initiatives meeting short term targets. The emergence of longer term schemes such as New Deal for Communities, Sure Start and permanent partnership arrangements may address this but of these three only the Local Strategic Partnerships are likely to survive into the future. Perhaps what is needed is a realistic acceptance that the benefits of interventions may not be capable of being measured by short term indicators and need to be considered in the longer term? As the National Evaluation of Sure Start admitted – the benefits of Sure Start may not be realised until those babies attend University.

### **8.8.3 The challenges of what people learn.**

Accepting that it is beneficial, and perhaps inevitable, that people will learn as they develop, the questions of what they learn and whether there is some framework of accepted learning might need further development. Only one of the fifteen case study key stakeholders had an urban regeneration qualification and yet they were all engaged in crucial decisions and delivery the consequences of which would last for decades.

Frameworks exist for identifying and showcasing best practice and the centres of excellence are emerging as a well as an increasing number of accredited courses for community leaders. In other fields such as the National Health Service, Non Executive Directors (that is: leaders from business or the community) are expected to meet certain standards of knowledge and learning and Executives are expected to partake in Continuous Professional Development. It could be that those involved in urban regeneration should have to meet certain learning standards but there are dangers in this:



- 1) The untaught understanding of an area by the non-professionals is vital when decisions are being made about people's homes and neighbourhoods.
- 2) Urban regeneration is such a broad subject or even concept that it is difficult to imagine how a course could be constructed that could adequately cover it. The current learning opportunities are described above as a "pic n mix" which suggests that dangers of simply consuming what is convenient and seems digestible. Perhaps what is needed is a "diet card" approach whereby local learning partnerships with the support of learning institutions would give guidance as to the selection of learning items appropriate to the tasks in hand? In this way learning would not need to be limited but could be accompanied by appropriate health warnings.

#### **8.8.4 Further research on the effects of transfer of learning.**

Areas that may require further research include the extent to which learning leads to changed actions outcomes over time. In this current research examples were revealed where learning transfer did lead to changes in action later. It would seem very valuable to investigate this further.

#### **8.8.5 Are there any signs of a new settlement emerging?**

In early 2005 the Department of Trade and Industry announced that Regional Development Agencies would have to follow a unified national evaluation framework rather than presenting their self evaluations based on a local choice of indicators. Commenting on this Roseveare stated that "they didn't get a good deal in the last spending review and they won't get one in the next unless they start proving their impact" (Loney 2005b: 12).

The Academy for Sustainable Communities is now in place (Redfearn 2005c: 16). This has been created principally following the Egan Review (ODPM 2004c) which identified a very serious skills shortage in regeneration. It is to be hoped that it will use learning from previous regeneration programmes in educating the current practitioners.

In Scotland a Scottish Centre for Regeneration is in place and in 2005 it launched a “Learning in Skills” pack. It now promotes knowledge transfer through many means including conferences, papers and its “Seeing is Believing” fund (SCR: 2006).

### **8.9 Evaluation – a fruitful exercise or wasted effort?**

This study has illustrated the massive complexities of the politics and management of urban regeneration over the study period. It has also shown how the topic has been fast moving with new programmes being introduced during every cycle of government. This pace of change and swirling around of initiatives and challenges has been truly challenging for all those concerned. The shift of the model in which learning transfer or knowledge exchange (Bailey 2005: 2) has to take place has been vast. This has been a shift from a closed Central Government commissioning model to a pluralist/partnership/small area model with many fluctuating stages in between.

This study has shown how the actors involved have reacted to this in numerous different ways to survive, to win, and to learn. The situation has been changing in a somewhat chaotic fashion and the responses to it have been largely reactive and mixed but there is clear evidence that actors at all levels have come through these eras with a continuing belief in the need for learning and the power of evaluation as just one of many routes to transferring learning.



At the same time theories and the practice of learning have moved in the wider society towards a belief in life-long learning, in learning that is situated in the appropriate context and in learning that is based more on exchange than transfer. As learning in urban regeneration matures it is settling around facilitative structures which better suit the new world of Networked Community Governance where each party needs to play their part in the context and alongside others. All those involved need to be able to work out what the problems are and not just the solutions.

There is therefore cause for some hope that learning is becoming embedded in English urban regeneration practice and that the faltering steps that have been discovered in this research may turn into firm paths. However if the future is to be judged by the past there remains the risk that the learning structures now being established such as the Regional Centres of Excellence, the Academy for Sustainable Communities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit Knowledge Management System are simply more in a long line of short term political initiatives which will be eclipsed before their benefits have had time to show through.

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## **Appendix One: The stakeholder Questionnaire:**

Note regarding prompts: Prompts may be used after the first answer to every question to ensure that any information available is recorded.

### **Set one: Learning before starting on the programme:**

- 1) Before your involvement in this programme had you had any formal training in urban regeneration or a related topic?

Prompt: Please state any relevant professional qualifications that you had at the time.

- 2) Before your involvement in this programme had you had an opportunity to discuss the programme with anyone who had worked on previous programmes?

Prompt: Did you learn any lessons from these discussions?

- 3) Did you read evaluation reports of any previous urban regeneration programmes before starting to work on the programme?

- 4) Did you make any other efforts at the time to ensure that you had the necessary knowledge base to be involved in the programme?

Prompt: Did anyone else make any other efforts at the time to ensure that you had the necessary knowledge base to be involved in the programme?

- 5) Did you think at the time that there was a problem about your level of knowledge?

Prompt: Did your managers or colleagues think at the time that there was a problem about your level of knowledge?

### **Set two: Learning during the programme:**

- 6) Once you had started to be involved in this programme had you had any formal training in urban regeneration or a related topic?

Prompt: Also please state any additional relevant professional qualifications that you had acquired by this point.

- 7) Once you had started to be involved in this programme had you had an opportunity to discuss the programme with anyone who had worked on previous programmes?

Prompt Did you learn any lessons from these discussions?

- 8) Once you had started to be involved in the programme did you read any evaluation reports of previous urban regeneration programmes?
- 9) Once you had started to be involved did you make any other efforts at the time to ensure that you had the necessary knowledge base to be involved in the programme?

Prompt: Once you had started to be involved did anyone else make any other efforts at the time to ensure that you had the necessary knowledge base to be involved in the programme?

- 10) Once you had started to be involved did you think at the time that there was a problem about your level of knowledge?
- 11) Once you had started to be involved did your managers or colleagues think at the time that there was an issue about your level of knowledge?

### **Set three: Evaluation during the programme**

- 11) During the programme was there any formal evaluation work undertaken by any party?
- 12) What did this consist of?
- 13) Were the emerging results available to you?
- 14) Did you use this to inform the way the programme was run?

Prompt: Did your colleagues use this to inform the way the programme was run?

- 15) In addition to formal evaluation work did you or your colleagues document or pass on lessons that were being learnt by the programme?

Prompt: How did you do this?

- 16) Were you aware of evaluations of other programmes that took place at the same time and did you or your colleagues access them in order to learn lessons for your own programme?

### **Set four: Post-hoc evaluation**

- 17) Was there an end of programme evaluation and if so at what point in the programme did it start?



18) Did the timing of this evaluation work enable all the necessary data to be collected?

19) Did you input to the evaluation work?

20) Do you feel that the terms of reference for the work would ensure that true learning of lessons could be passed on to other people?

21) Are you aware if the lessons from such evaluation work were disseminated?

22) Are you aware of any examples where the evaluation learning was actually used by others?

23) Have you subsequently used the learning from these evaluations in your own work/life since?

#### **Set five general commentary on evaluations**

24) Thinking about each element of the evaluation work that you have mentioned above, in each case who has commissioned the work, set it terms of reference and controlled the input?

Prompt for each element of evaluation work.

25) Was there any contention about who should do the work, how it was conducted, who should see the results, how they should be used or any other aspect of the process?

Prompt for each element of evaluation work.

26) Thinking about your experience of evaluation as we have discussed how useful do you feel that evaluation has been in helping you to do a better job?

27) What would you say where the best points and worst points about your experience of evaluation around this programme?

Prompt for best points and worst points.

## **Appendix Two: Assessment framework for the analysis of regeneration programme evaluations**

### **1) Programme**

#### **a) Name and phase:**

#### **b) Objectives of programme being evaluated:**

### **2) Who conducted the evaluation?**

#### **a) Reference:**

#### **b) Author/contractor:**

#### **c) Who commissioned the evaluation and to whom are they accountable?**

### **3) Objectives (stated purposes) of the evaluation:**

### **4) Evaluation methods used and operational components:**

### **5) Relationship with typologies including extent of stakeholder involvement:**

### **6) Timing of evaluation:**

#### **a) Dates:**

#### **a) In programme/post-hoc?**

### **7) Extent of integration of the evaluation to the programmes' operations.**



**8) Summary of main points.**

**9) Lessons for policy/recommendations for future evaluations.**

**10) Arrangement for feedback to the programme and other stakeholders,**

**11) Evidence that lessons have been transferred:**

**12) Comments**

**13) Contact details:**